



# London Smoking Cessation Transformation Programme

Smoking and Quitting Insight

January 2022



**Online Focus  
Groups**  
[60 mins]

**Telephone Depth  
Interviews**  
[20 mins]

**x12**

**x 10 Polish /  
Eastern European**  
**x 10 BAME**

**Recruitment to specification of:**

**Area of London**

**Attitude to quitting**

**Smoker profile**

**Age**



# Exploratory work with smokers and recent quitters looking at **attitudes** and **behaviour** regarding **smoking** and **quitting**

Fieldwork undertaken **22<sup>nd</sup> Nov – 15<sup>th</sup> Dec**

To explore:

Attitudes to smoking generally and personally

Drivers and barriers to quitting

Perceptions and experiences of the range of approaches to quitting

Attitudes to future quit attempts

[Testing campaign messaging]



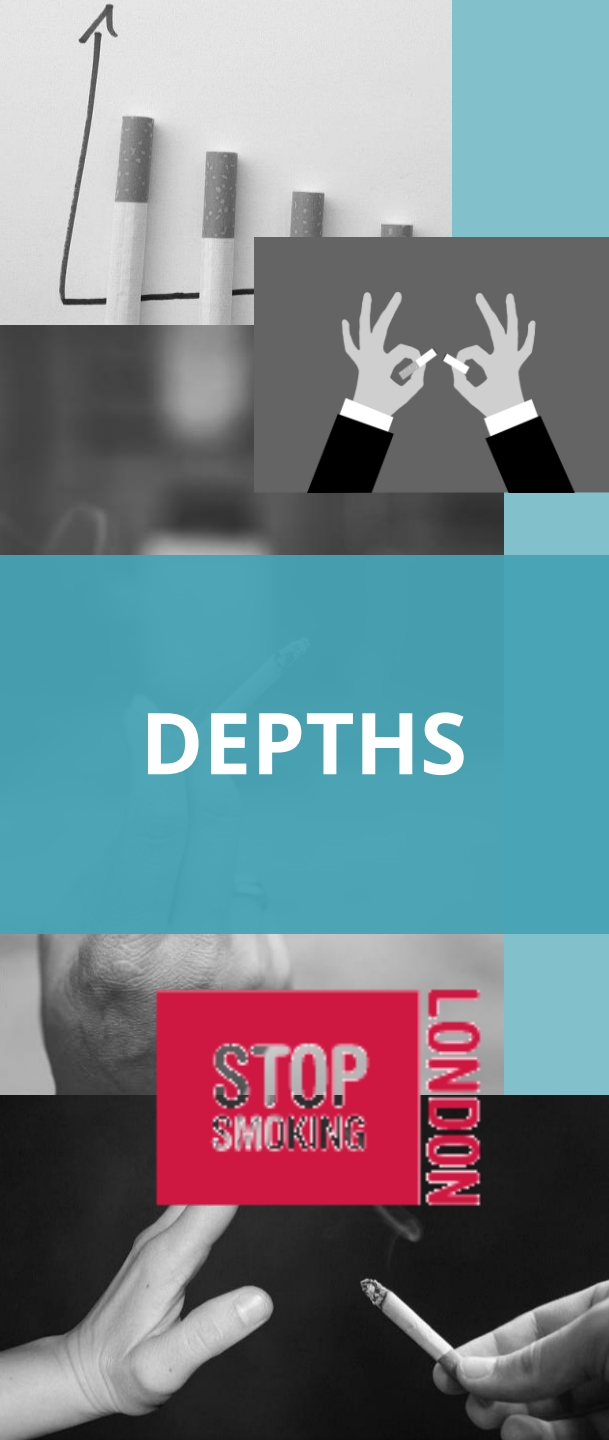
# FOCUS GROUPS

Group	Area of London	Attitude to Quitting	Smoker Profile	Age
1	North West	Tried to quit in past 12 months and failed Feel they could/ will try again / want to try again in next 12 months	Light	18-30
2	North West	Tried to quit in past 12 months and failed Feel they couldn't/ won't try again / don't want to try again	Medium	31-50
3	North West	Haven't seriously tried to quit in past 2 years [but don't reject idea of ever trying]	Medium / Heavy At least 3 to smoke 21+	51-65
4	North East	Tried to quit in past 12 months and failed Feel they couldn't/ won't try again / don't want to try again	Light	31-50
5	North East	Haven't seriously tried to quit in past 2 years [but don't reject idea of ever trying]	Light / Medium	51-65
6	North East	Tried to quit in past 12 months and failed Feel they could/ will try again / want to try again in next 12 months	Medium / Heavy At least 3 to smoke 21+	18-30
7	South West	Tried to quit in past 12 months and failed Feel they couldn't/ won't try again / don't want to try again	Light	51-65
8	South West	Haven't seriously tried to quit in past 2 years [but don't reject idea of ever trying]	Light / Medium	18-30
9	South West	Tried to quit in past 12 months and failed Feel they could/ will try again / want to try again in next 12 months	Medium / Heavy At least 3 to smoke 21+	31-50
10	South East	Tried to quit in past 12 months and failed Feel they couldn't/ won't try again / don't want to try again	Light	18-30
11	South East	Haven't seriously tried to quit in past 2 years [but don't reject idea of ever trying]	Light / Medium	31-50
12	South East	Tried to quit in past 12 months and failed Feel they could/ will try again / want to try again in next 12 months	Medium / Heavy At least 3 to smoke 21+	51-65



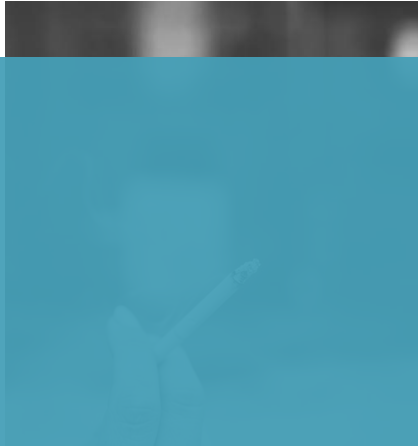
# DEPTHS

Depth	Area of London	Attitude to Quitting	Smoker profile	Age	Ethnicity
1	North West	Tried to quit in past 12 months and failed	Light	18-30	Polish / Eastern European
2	North West	Haven't seriously tried to quit in past 2 years	Medium	31-50	Polish / Eastern European
3	North West	Tried to quit in past 12 months and failed	Medium / Heavy At least 3 to smoke 21+	51-65	BAME
4	North West	Haven't seriously tried to quit in past 2 years	ANY	ANY	BAME
5	North West	Tried to quit in past 12 months and failed	ANY	ANY	Polish / Eastern European
6	North East	Haven't seriously tried to quit in past 2 years	Light	31-50	BAME
7	North East	Tried to quit in past 12 months and failed	Light / Medium	51-65	BAME
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14	South West	Tried to quit in past 12 months and failed	ANY	ANY	BAME
15	South West	Tried to quit in past 12 months and failed	ANY	ANY	Polish / Eastern European
16	South East	Tried to quit in past 12 months and failed	Light	18-30	BAME
17	South East	Haven't seriously tried to quit in past 2 years	Light / Medium	31-50	BAME
18	South East	Tried to quit in past 12 months and failed	Medium / Heavy At least 3 to smoke 21+	51-65	Polish / Eastern European
19	South East	Haven't seriously tried to quit in past 2 years	ANY	ANY	Polish / Eastern European
20	South East	Haven't seriously tried to quit in past 2 years	ANY	ANY	BAME



**STOP  
SMOKING**

**LONDON**



# SETTING THE SCENE



## CHANGING ATTITUDES TO SMOKING

### Perception that the change in regulations has led to fewer people starting to smoke, and has impacted how smoking – and smokers – are viewed

“There's people that I worked with when I was 18 / 19 who gave up when they imposed the smoking ban, because they were like, ‘There's no way I'm smoking outside - I'm used to a smoking room’... Now as things have changed, there's proof that it harmed pregnant women, it harms babies, so it's banned in public places and it stopped more people starting smoking.”

*18 – 30 / Light Smoker*

“Over the last few years, you're kind of made to feel a bit more dirty about it.”

*31-50 / Light Smoker*

### Many believe that stigma around smoking has grown and continues to grow, particularly in line with the increased understanding of health harms from smoking and second-hand smoke

“It's really frowned upon now, it's considered anti-social isn't it.”

*51 – 65 / Light Smoker*

“Most of my friends don't smoke anymore. No, not at all. I think I think it's considered, certainly around me, antisocial really.”

*51 – 65 / Light/ Medium Smoker*

“The attitudes towards it and the more we learn about health as a society, and how health crazy we can be as well, the more our vices are frowned upon. I think smoking is probably one of the biggest vices that's frowned upon which is really weird because alcohol is just as destructive... there's a stigma attached to smokers that isn't attached to vapers.”

*31-50 / Light Smoker*

## CHANGING ATTITUDES TO SMOKING

In today's society, the new craze is to be sober, go to the gym, be healthy, be vegetarian, quit smoking. Like amongst the youth, at University as well. That's the new cool thing to do - look after your health, be aware of the climate, recycling. It almost feels like sometimes I need to hide and have a cigarette, or go around the corner, run and do it away from public. It feels a bit socially not acceptable, because it's been regulated so much. You can't buy Menthol or clickies now. You can't smoke indoors and society and the regulation makes you feel it's wrong that you're doing it.

*51-65 / Light Smoker*



# CHANGING ATTITUDES TO SMOKING

## Society's perceptions impact the smoker's stance - ashamed, guilty -

"Smoking was a formative part of ...you know, we learned from movie stars, we learned from rock stars that it was a cool thing to do. Yeah, now, the cool thing is a very individualist thing, it really is. So... yeah, it has criminal attachments that it never had before. When you do it, you feel quite lot of guilt I think"

*51 - 65 / Medium/Heavy Smoker*

"Yeah, I'm that outcast. It's like, Oh go over there you horrible smoker, kind of thing"

*18-30 / Light smoker*

I really like smoking, but then I have this terrible guilt because I have two small children. So I didn't smoke at the time I was pregnant, and I said I was never going to smoke again and then I do so I don't ever smoke in front of him. So I'll enjoy a cigarette but then in the back of my mind I'm feeling guilty that I shouldn't be doing that."

*31-50 / Medium smoker*

## - defensive, self-justifying -

"The truth is I still quite enjoy smoking. It's reward at the end of the day."

*51 - 65 / Light Smoker*

"I think it's personal choice...it's a social thing, that it's something to do and it's relaxing. So if you're relaxed, and you're happy, that's good for you. I think it produces endorphins, which are sort of chemicals produced by the body. So it's relative, isn't it. So I think it's the nanny state because they know you must stop or go to vaping or try nicotine patches, or God knows what. It's ten a day, I don't think it's gonna kill me."

*51 - 65 / Light / Medium Smoker*

"There was a time you could smoke in clubs and pubs and all that but now they track you outside. But on a personal level I still enjoy it .I don't have any qualms. It's just that a bit more different now than other people."

*51 - 65 / Light Smoker*



## THE FUTURE: A SMOKE FREE CITY

Amongst some who typically dislike their own smoking, the 'ideal' of a smoke free city **appeals**, and feels **achievable** for a younger generation

"My son's 19 going on 20. I don't think a single one of his friends smoke - I can see a day where the only smokers are the idiots above 30. But kids will get their kicks elsewhere."

*51 - 65 / Medium / Heavy Smoker*

But to many, particularly entrenched smokers, this is nothing more than an **ideal which lacks realism**, and smoking will always be around to some extent

"It's been around for centuries, and it will still be around. They'll presumably raise the price of it, and God knows what - that'll never stop. But I think people will still smoke."

*51 - 65 / Light Smoker*

Often smokers recognise that restrictions and regulations will continue to increase, making it ever more difficult to smoke

It's always gonna be there. It'll always be there, they might phase it out in certain areas like when you're going to a posh area of London there'll be no smoking in an area, like no drinking in an area, that sort of thing.

*31-50 / Light / Medium Smoker*

## THE FUTURE: A SMOKE FREE CITY

# Some discussion over what a smoke free city would really mean

"I think it's in Singapore somewhere, they've got little squares that you have to stand on to have a cigarette. And they can only fit a certain amount of people on them. If you're outside the square, you get fined. And there's cameras on them."

*31 - 50 / Light / Medium Smoker*

When you say 'smoke free', if you burn something, there's smoke. It's a bit of a non event. It's too general. Because there are too many things that generate smoke. Smoking is just a tiny, tiny part of it. But there are much bigger things that generate smoke than the odd person puffing. Surely, they're not going to ban all flights from Heathrow and Gatwick are they?

*51 - 65 / Light / Medium Smoker*

## And some were resistant

Smoke free to me means a nanny state where we won't be able to smoke even outside because at the moment, all the fun people go outside and have a cigarette. I imagine what it means is no smoking anywhere inside, outside in the whole city of London, which is not feasible.

*51 - 65 / Light / Medium Smoker*



## THE FUTURE: VAPING

**Many see vapes as the new problem addiction...  
... they're the next 'cool' thing, particularly popular  
amongst young people**

“ I think most of us in this group when we were kids, vaping wasn't a thing. Now vaping is a massive industry. And children probably aren't going to be interested in taking up cigarettes and rolling tobacco, but they will be enamoured of the idea of a fruity, little vape – the disposable ones. And I think we're going to have a whole new generation of addicted kids on fruity vapes like these, you know, so many different flavours.

*51-65 / Light Smoker*”

“ Traditional smoking is not really in-vogue, for lack of a better word, because of vapes.

*31-50 / Light Smoker*”

## LEVELS OF SMOKING: POPULATION

**Mixed responses regarding what percentage of the population smoke - ranging from less than 5% to 60%**

**Older groups were guessing much higher proportions**

**Some were surprised to hear the statistic is around 1 in 7**

"I find that a bit mad because that's really low. To be part of that lower proportion is a bit surprising."

*31 - 50 / Medium / Heavy Smoker*

"If only 14% of the population smokes, a lot of them must live down here because every time I go outside, there's always people outside smoking!"

*31 - 50 / Light / Medium Smoker*

**...others can see it does reflect their shrinking circle of smokers**

"In my circle, it's really less and less people are smoking. So it probably doesn't surprise me. I'm in the minority and not the majority."

*51-65 / Light / Medium Smoker*

**STOP  
SMOKING**  
LONDON



# THE PERSONAL CONTEXT



# RELATIONSHIP WITH SMOKING

**Mixed and volatile relationship that can fluctuate along the spectrum - both in the short-term day-to-day, and in the much longer term, over years / decades**

## LOVE

## HATE

"I really **enjoy** it, it's my only vice."

*31 - 50 / Medium Smoker*

"If I feel a bit rough, a cigarette can either turn me one way or the other, it can make me **feel**

**good or worse."**

*31 - 50 / Medium Smoker*

"I absolutely **hate** it, it really makes me ashamed that I'm not able to shift it."

*18 - 30 / Light Smoker*

"It has changed over the years, I really **didn't like** it before. I didn't like that I was addicted, so I cut down. But I **love** smoking now."

*51 - 65 / Light / Medium Smoker*

"I'm torn because I really **like** smoking. But then I have this terrible **guilt** because I have two small children."

*31 - 50 / Medium Smoker*

"I'd say it's 10% **enjoyment** and 90% **regret."**

*18 - 30 / Light / Medium Smoker*

"It's a kind of like a **reward** for me."

*31 - 50 / Medium Smoker*

"It's **relaxing**. If you're relaxed, and you're happy, that's **good for you** and your blood pressure. It produces endorphins, which are chemicals produced by the body."

*51 - 65 / Light / Medium Smoker*

"I **enjoy** it, I **love** it. I want to **quit**, but I **enjoy** it. I'd like to be able to have the self control where I can have one with a glass of wine. But then not go back to nine when I wake up the next day. "

*18 - 30 / Light Smoker*

"I used to really **enjoy** smoking. And now I **don't** at all."

*18 - 30 / Light / Medium Smoker*

**"It's a love / hate relationship."**

*31 - 50 / Medium / Heavy Smoker*



# RELATIONSHIP WITH SMOKING

**"It's a love / hate relationship."**

*31 - 50 / Medium / Heavy Smoker*

**Most enjoy smoking, many feel they benefit from it; yet few don't want to quit or don't wish they had never started**

**LOVE**

**HATE**

“

I hate the smell. I think it stinks. I don't like how my fingers smell afterwards. But I enjoy it at the same time so much. I really enjoy a cigarette after eating. I enjoy a cigarette in the morning with my coffee. I enjoy one in the in the afternoon. I enjoy the process of smoking. I like trying different types of tobacco. I enjoy the socialising as well. It's a break from your work, but at the same time it's a disgusting smelly habit that is bad for health.. In the back of my mind, I wish I never I never started because I have tried to quit on a number of occasions, but I've given up giving up, but if I had a choice I wouldn't smoke, but I do.

*31-50 / Medium Smoker*

”



# RELATIONSHIP WITH SMOKING

## WHY SMOKE?

Habit / routine

\*

Alleviate stress /  
anxiety

\*

Boredom

\*

Segment the day /  
punctuate time

\*

Social Vs Me time

\*

Addiction / craving

**Smoking is integral to who they are; their **identity**; their social circle; part of the daily pattern of life**

"It's something that has been part of my life for as long as I can remember. When people quit they are just substituting one thing for something else. It's a mental thing really. I have a fag and a coffee every morning. It's just the thing that we do."

*31-50 / Heavy Smoker [Polish]*

**The force of habit and routine is often as challenging to break – and to consider trying to break – as addiction and nicotine cravings**

The majority of it is the habitual side. In order to break that you would have to change your whole routine, your life routine, your daily, you know, everyday routine. You would have to not have that cup of tea in the morning. You'd find something else to do after your dinner. Somewhere to sit on your hands when you're on the phone. I mean, even now I'm talking to you now, in my head is saying, want a cigarette, a cigarette. I don't need a cigarette. I just want one because I'm on the phone. We do it all the time you think, It's a pattern, you think Oh, two hours have passed? Now it's my time for another cup of tea? With a cigarette?

Yeah, just a habit."

*18 - 30 / Light Smoker*

# IDENTITY

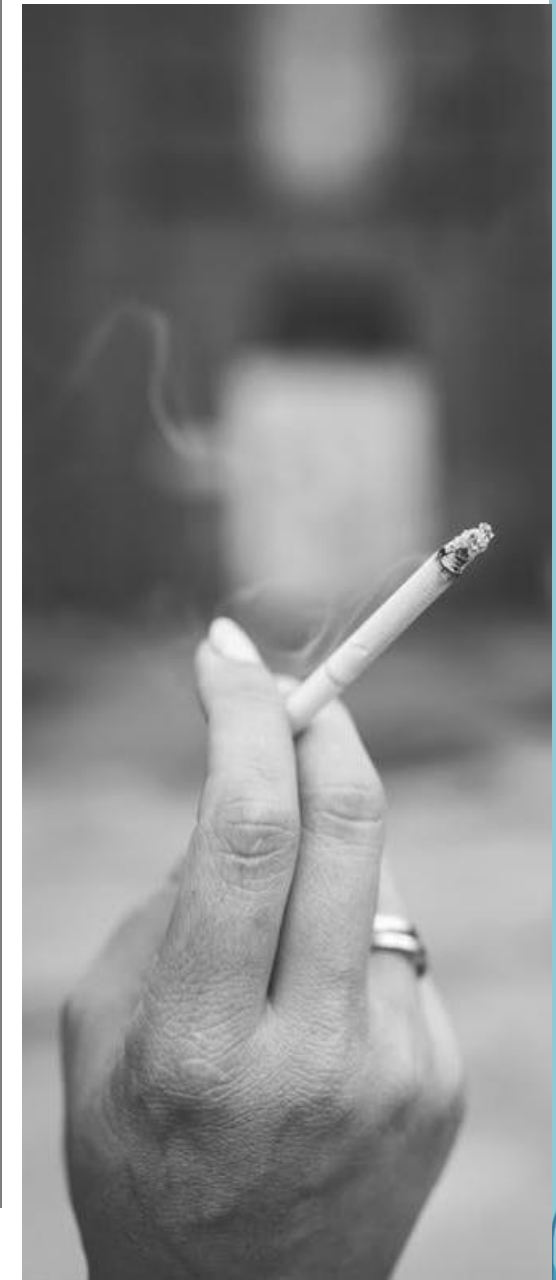
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**'[Smoking] is part of my breathing process. I am compelled to smoke, it is an automatic thing, it is involuntary.**

**I get up and I am ashamed to say, before I even have a wash I have a cigarette. The first one [helps], it's the first one and I am trying to chase the feeling of the first one and it goes with my coffee. It's a habit, it becomes like a routine, I have a ritual. I wake up, I go to the kitchen I switch the kettle on, the coffee is in the cup, the packet, the noise when I inhale the cigarette I like.'**

*51 - 65 / Heavy Smoker, Eastern European*

”



# RELATIONSHIP WITH SMOKING

## WHY SMOKE?

Habit / routine

\*

Alleviate stress /  
anxiety

\*

Boredom

\*

Segment the day /  
punctuate time

\*

Social Vs Me time

\*

Addiction / craving

**Many describe how they turn to a cigarette to relieve stress and anxiety**

**Little recognition that the addiction creates stress**

"I just I think when I'm stressed the only thing that's going to calm me down is a cigarette, which actually it's probably not. It's just an excuse to have one".

*18-30 / Light / Medium Smoker*

"When I get stressed out [smoking] is a coping mechanism."

*30-50 / Heavy Smoker [Polish]*

**Quitting can be seen as a 'double whammy' of increasing stress and at the same time removing the coping mechanism**

“

When you quit smoking, you do get withdrawal symptoms. And those are very difficult to deal with. You get angry, you get anxiety. Sometimes you feel that, why the hell did you choose to, you know, stop smoking? And then you feel that... why is this happening to me when I'm trying to give it up? And then you think, Okay, let me go have a cigarette. And, and you do

*31-50 / Medium Smoker [Asian]*

”

# RELATIONSHIP WITH SMOKING

## WHY SMOKE?

Habit / routine

\*

Alleviate stress / anxiety

\*

Boredom

\*

Segment the day / punctuate time

\*

Social Vs Me time

\*

Addiction / craving

## Several talked about smoking to relieve boredom, or smoking more when not busy

"I smoke out of boredom. I am too busy at work to smoke and I manage all day".

*18-30 / Light Smoker, Asian*

## In this regard, [the boredom of] lockdown has impacted consumption for some

"I wasn't smoking. I hadn't smoked for about six weeks and then lockdown came and I just started smoking again, like back to the way I had before. So I blame lockdown really for me still being a smoker."

*51-65 / Light Smoker*

"I had no interest in smoking cigarettes, even when drinking wasn't really a huge fan. Then boredom from lockdown. I would I was at University at the time in my student accommodation, we had a garden, it became the smokers' area. And it was the only place the government allowed me to be so that's kind of where my habit began."

*18-30 / Light Smoker*

## For some it marks the end of something – a task, a client appointment – and the moving onto something else

"But it's kind of like when I've got a big job done, a task done... that type of thing. It's like a little treat, I guess, just to have that break. So that's how it works for me."

*51-65 / medium / Heavy Smoker*



# RELATIONSHIP WITH SMOKING

## WHY SMOKE?

Habit / routine

\*

Alleviate stress /  
anxiety

\*

Boredom

\*

Segment the day /  
punctuate time

\*

Social Vs Me time

\*

Addiction / craving

**Smoking can be loved for both its social aspect and its facilitation of a solitary moment**

**Socially, it creates a sense of belonging; fitting in  
It can create a bond**

"Now that I have stopped smoking, it's just a little bit difficult because my best friend and I, we've been best friends since we were 15. We've been smoking since we were 15. So, like, everybody else in our social circle doesn't smoke. So it just used to be us two.

But now she's like, Oh, come and join me and I'm like, I'll stand outside with you but I'm not... and I mean, I just go and stand outside of the firm and watch her smoke a cigarette and it is a bit weird. Like yeah, I know it sounds silly, but I used to be like our little thing and now we don't have that."

*31-50 / Light Smoker*

**Others treasure the moment of stepping away from 'life' ... some 'me' time**

"I smoke quite a lot because I'm looking for that five minutes out...I find that I like the process of rolling a cigarette and taking time out, just having that time to myself."

*31-50 / Light / Medium Smoker*

"Smoking is a reason to get out and have a break from your life for a second."

*31-50 / Light / Medium Smoker*

**Can help in removing self from [potentially] volatile situation**

"Sometimes you swallow back anger by lighting up a cigarette. You know, you're actually thinking or ruminating on something, rather than thinking it through. You spark up a cigarette and I don't know, swallow it all back.

*51-65 / Medium / Heavy Smoker*

# RELATIONSHIP WITH SMOKING

## WHY SMOKE?

Habit / routine

\*

Alleviate stress /  
anxiety

\*

Boredom

\*

Segment the day /  
punctuate time

\*

Social Vs Me time

\*

Addiction / craving

**Most recognise they are addicted – youngest are least likely to**

**Don't tend to relate 'stress relief' to satisfying a craving unless prompted**

**Tend to talk about having cravings as part of quitting process, rather than an everyday issue**

**Some talk of chasing the 'hit'...first cigarette of the day is typically the best at delivering this**

**This is often a reason that vapes are rejected, because you don't get the same hit**

"You light up a cigarette, and you have that big drag, and you just feel fantastic. And the world, you know, is a greater place for it. I can't remember the last cigarette I had whether it felt like that, but I think there was probably a few, there must have been because that's the thing you chase."

*51-65 / Medium / Heavy Smoker*

# RELATIONSHIP WITH SMOKING

## THE NEGATIVES

Cost

\*

Health

\*

Smell

\*

Family's perception

\*

Public perception

\*

## Multiple recognised drawbacks

"I said from when they went from being a 10 box to a 20 box, I said right that's it I'm not smoking anymore. But yeah, I'm still buying 20 boxes and then when it went from being a certain amount for 20, which is now like 10 plus, 11 pounds, 12 pounds you're spending on cigarettes I could be doing so much more of my money."

*31-50 / Medium Smoker*

"We know the health risk. We're not ignorant. None of us are that. But a lot of us enjoy it. We don't enjoy the cost, but we still go and buy another packet..."

*51 - 65 / Medium / Heavy Smoker*

"The smell of cigarette can be a particular detail that changes someone's opinion of me."

*18 - 30 / Light Smoker*

"I know that my kids hate the fact I smoke. So I feel quite guilty."

*31 - 50 / Light Smoker*

You automatically feel judged in today's society. Where we live in like, green zone areas around London.... you know, no smoking in the bus stops... you almost feel guilty, like a bad person to do it."

*31 - 50 / Medium / Heavy Smoker*

# SMOKING & CHILDREN

## CHILDREN

**Negative reactions to the idea of children taking up smoking, but some feel there's nothing they can do**

"I'd be very sad. I'd be very disappointed."  
*51 - 65 / Light Smoker*

"I'd be gutted."  
*51 - 65 / Light Smoker*

"I would go absolutely mad and probably ground him for a year."  
*18 - 30 / Light Smoker*

"I'd advise and try to stop them, but really what can I do to stop them if they do."  
*18 - 30 / Light Smoker*

**Concerns about the impact of their smoking on their children / grandchildren**

**Many take steps to smoke elsewhere, or hide smoking from them**

"When I was a small child, I used to see my father smoke, and I wanted to smoke - I would steal his cigarettes. I have a son now, and I don't want him to smoke. I don't really smoke in front of him... I don't want him to pick it up from me, because daddy's doing it. Kids do pick up things from parents a lot."

*31 - 50 / Medium Smoker*

**For some their children provide the encouragement for them to quit**

"When my children were in primary school, they got to this point where they just started harassing me about not smoking. They're just like smoking is really, really bad for you, Mum."

*31 - 50 / Light Smoker*

**Not wanting to sound like a hypocrite was a concern for some**

"I wouldn't like it. But then I can't be a hypocrite. When they get older and notice me smoking and then they smoke and I have a go at them, I'm being a hypocrite."

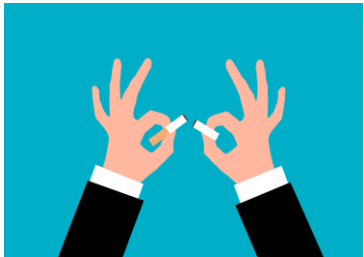
*18 - 30 / Light Smoker*



**"You should keep it away from kids and I do. I don't smoke near my nieces or around children."**

*31 - 50 / Medium Smoker*

**STOP  
SMOKING**  
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# VAPING



# VAPING

“

My son is the proper, serious vaper in the household. He has so much paraphernalia. It's not real. I think he's spent something between £3000-£7000 on masses of little RDA units. So I've tried just about every concoction of the liquids that he's had. To me they all smell like Parma Violets, regardless of what they are meant to be. I've tried the IQOS heated tobacco ones.

...It's not really that I need to be looking at alternatives. I enjoy the taste of a cigarette, I'm triggered by the smell of a cigarette. And when I'm vaping I actually try and avoid the nicotine products if I can. I suppose it's a bit of replacement because I'd rather not have the nicotine that triggers something in your brain to want more.

*51 - 65 / Light / Medium Smoker*

”

Nearly all have tried, some out of curiosity, others in an attempt to cut down or quit

Some feel it's the 'thing to do' nowadays, even for non-smokers or children

# VAPING: THE POSITIVES

SOCIALLY  
ACCEPTABLE

HEALTHIER

CHEAPER

LESS SMELLY

ENJOYABLE

SMOKE  
INDOORS

“I do vape from time to time that's more sociable, when a friends brought out new liquids and they want me to try that flavour. It can be quite nice, because you can do it indoors and it's more acceptable.”

*18 - 30 / Medium / Heavy Smoker*

“I smoke around maybe 10 cigarettes a day, but I also vape - it depends on my mood. If I'm indoors, watching TV, I vape. If I'm having a drink, or people are around, I'd go out for a cigarette. I don't do it as a method to quit, it gives me a different kind of craving.”

*31 - 50 / Medium / Heavy Smoker*

# VAPING: THE POSITIVES

SOCIALLY  
ACCEPTABLE

HEALTHIER

CHEAPER

LESS SMELLY

ENJOYABLE

SMOKE  
INDOORS

"I think it's better for you than smoking though. It's got to be better than smoking cigarettes."

*18 - 30 / Light Smoker*

"I quite enjoy vaping as well as smoking. I tend to smoke more but if I'm out of tobacco, I can quite happily move on to vaping as well."

*51 - 65 / Light Smoker*

"You can get flavours and then it's more enjoyable. So I could sit there, chuffing away all night and just enjoy it more than I would a normal cigarette."

*18 - 30 / Light Smoker*

# VAPING: THE POSITIVES

SOCIALLY  
ACCEPTABLE

HEALTHIER

CHEAPER

LESS SMELLY

ENJOYABLE

SMOKE  
INDOORS

"It's a lot cheaper. You can get them for like six pounds. it lasts a decent amount of time – you're almost paying half."

*18 - 30 / Medium / Heavy Smoker*

"I just find it a bit less smelly and gross."

*31 - 50 / Medium / Heavy Smoker*

# VAPING CONCERNS

USAGE

TASTE

EFFECTS

HEALTH

CHOICE

**Very easy to use 'all the time'**

"I have a friend who has gone to vaping. Now she vapes more than she ever used to smoke because she's constantly working from home now. She vapes inside the house all day."

*18 - 30 / Medium / Heavy Smoker*

"Everyone said that I was actually smoking it more. Because you don't even light it, it's just so easy. It was like a dummy. Constantly just using it."

*31 - 50 / Medium Smoker*

"I definitely became more addicted to nicotine when I got a vape, because you could have it constantly you wouldn't have to think about it. There's no signal to stop any point."

*18 - 30 / Medium / Heavy Smoker*

# VAPING CONCERNS

USAGE

TASTE

EFFECTS

HEALTH

CHOICE

"I've tried vapes but I didn't like them, because a lot of them are flavoured and I don't enjoy it. I like the harshness of a cigarette."

*31 - 50 / Medium Smoker*

"I don't understand vaping, I don't get it. I don't get why anyone would smoke a Marlboro light but then smoke something that's cherry flavoured. I just don't get it."

*31 - 50 / Medium Smoker*

# VAPING CONCERNS

USAGE

TASTE

EFFECTS

HEALTH

CHOICE

**Lots of talk about harshness;  
sore throats; cough**

*"I get a sore throat automatically  
when I use a vape."*

*31 - 50 / Medium Smoker*

*"I've tried to vape but that makes  
you cough more and you're sore. I  
could smoke 30 fags and I'd still feel  
better than on a vape."*

*51 - 65 / Medium / Heavy Smoker*

*"I choked my guts up."*

*31 - 50 / Light / Medium Smoker*

**For some, isn't enough 'hit';  
others disagree**

*"I didn't like it. It wasn't giving the nicotine  
rush and it was not giving me the kind of  
flavour of tobacco that you normally get."*

*31 - 50 / Medium Smoker, Asian*

*"I find with the vape that the nicotine  
can be very heavy. And it gives me the  
head spins much quicker than cigarettes  
would. And that's put me off a little bit."*

*18 - 30 / Light Smoker*

# VAPING CONCERNS

USAGE

TASTE

EFFECTS

HEALTH

CHOICE

"It's better the devil you know. At least with a cigarette, I know what crap is in it. I know it's bad for me. Whereas with vapes I feel like we'll find out in 10 years time, what cancerous chemicals are in them, and all this flavour stuff. So I know what I'm getting with a cigarette."

*18 - 30 / Light Smoker*

"You're smoking battery powered oil. It can't be that good. I don't trust it really at all."

*18 - 30 / Light Smoker*

"Has vaping been tested? I'm uncertain at the moment, probably from a health perspective... No-one really knows the effects or what it's gonna do to you. I read an article last week which said it could actually be worse than smoking."

*51 - 65 / Light Smoker*

# VAPING CONCERNS

USAGE

TASTE

EFFECTS

HEALTH

CHOICE



“There are so many different brands out there, so it’s which one to go for.”

*31 - 50 / Light / Medium Smoker*

Guidance needed on finding the ‘right’ vape

# ROLE OF VAPING IN QUITTING

Vaping is regarded by most smokers as a quit aid, with some success stories – mostly amongst younger people

“I’m cutting down and starting to use a vape now and smoke less cigarettes to try and completely come off.”

*18 - 30 / Light / Medium Smoker*

“I just I wanted to stop. I went to a vape shop. At first, I was given a vape that wasn't very good, and I was struggling really hard with it. I had one cigarette, and then I regretted it. Then I went back to a different vape shop and got a really good vape, and didn't smoke from then.”

*18 - 30 / Light / Medium Smoker*

Many use vapes alongside cigarettes as a way to cut down

“I've started vaping once or twice a week to try and slow down on the nicotine. But at the end, I'm doing both at the moment. ”

*51 - 65 / Light Smoker*

“I've tried stopping since I bought a vape. I'm mixing it up, but I'm smoking less now, because I'm smoking vape as well. ”

*31 - 50 / Light Smoker*

“Having the vape is more of a healthier option to the cigarette so I find myself trying to smoke more of it than I would the cigarette.”

*18 - 30 / Medium / Heavy Smoker*

# ROLE OF VAPING IN QUITTING

But lack of intensity of the 'hit' from vapes can be a barrier

"You just don't get the same satisfaction as you do with a cigarette if you're feeling stressed."

*18 - 30 / Light / Medium Smoker*

"It's just not got quite the same intensity to it or feeling as smoking a cigarette. It can occasionally help in the short term for a little bit of the fix, but not really replace it for me."

*18 - 30 / Light / Medium Smoker*

"I had to end up going back on the cigarettes so it doesn't give me that satisfaction - that hit."

*18 - 30 / Medium / Heavy Smoker*

For some, there's too much effort involved

"I just got lazy with the vape. Because you have to charge it, you have to refill it, you have to buy coils. Whereas with a cigarette, you just buy a packet - it's just easy. I use a certain vape juice, and if that runs out I'll just have a cigarette instead."

*18 - 30 / Light / Medium Smoker*

And concerns over still having a strong, if not worse addiction

"If I can quit, I want to quit totally."

*31 - 50 / Light Smoker*

"I'm not going to go from smoking to vaping. Because that's just quitting one poison for another."

*51 - 65 / Light Smoker*

"I'd rather smoke cigarettes occasionally, than start vaping because there's no cutoff point, you can vape all day, every day pretty much. Just do it constantly."

*18 - 30 / Light Smoker*

# ROLE OF VAPING IN QUITTING

“ I did it for about three weeks, then I thought, why am I going to take up something else just as addictive? If I want to give it up, I don't want to go on from one thing to another...”

I remember a friend going on holiday and she hadn't smoked a cigarette in two years - she had a vape. She dropped it on holiday and it broke. So she went and bought a packet of cigarettes, because she couldn't get another vape. She just gave up two years of not smoking because her vape broke.”

18 - 30 / Light Smoker

BAD EXPERIENCES

**STOP  
SMOKING**  
**LONDON**



# QUITTING



# ATTITUDES TO QUITTING

**Most have tried to quit - typically with a history of multiple quit attempts**

**...some for long periods of time, even years**

**Mixed emotions about quitting, most see it as an ideal, and very few reject the idea completely**

**Only the youngest don't recognise how hard it can be**

**"It would be nice to quit. But then I think the reality of quitting is quite difficult. It's one thing to just quit cigarettes but before you know it, you do something social or all those habits like drinking coffee or reading the paper or whatever, you just want that thing back. So in a way I'd love to be smoke free but to be honest I think you need to be really, really, really desperate to quit to make it work."**

51 - 65 / Light Smoker

**"It was very difficult to give it up. It's not easy to quit smoking, honestly."**

31 - 50 / Medium Smoker

**"That's my reason behind wanting to quit, knowing that the sooner I quit, the more of a difference it will make later on in life. It doesn't matter, the fact I've been smoking for how many years, but it's the fact that I can stop and actually make a change."**

18 - 30 / Light / Medium Smoker

# ATTITUDES TO QUITTING

No matter what age,  
smokers set **age  
milestones** as quitting  
goals

Whilst the young feel  
there's still time and  
many **don't question**  
their ability to quit  
when they are ready...

...Older smokers **regret**  
not quitting in their  
youth and can feel it's  
**too late**

"I made an agreement a couple years back with my Mum - if I agreed that I'd quit before I was 25, she wouldn't be on my back. So I have that in my head now as a thing where when I hit like 24 I'll start trying to quit so that I'm not smoking when I'm 25."

18 - 30 / Light / Medium Smoker

"My motivation for stopping is that I'll be 60 next year, I've got to the crossroads that if I don't do it, I'm never gonna do it as I've watched my Dad die of it. I can feel myself wheezing when I lie down at night, so if I don't do it, I'm never gonna do it. It's either do or die."

51 - 65 / Medium / Heavy Smoker

"When you're 30, you think you're invincible. But the older you get, you know that what you now do with your life is going to shorten it. I'm getting older, and I'll get there and if I don't do it now, I'm cutting my life down."

51 - 65 / Medium / Heavy Smoker

"I think you get to a certain age and you start to be more concerned about your own mortality. When you're 30, you're all gung-ho and let's go for it. But the older you get, the more aches and pains you get, the more you do start to think about your own mortality and you're actually making it worse."

51 - 65 / Medium / Heavy Smoker

## ATTITUDES TO QUITTING



I'd like to quit for the future. I know that while we're young we can indulge and enjoy ourselves a little bit. But there's also a time when we should be capping certain habits in order to live a nice, happy, illness-free type of life when we get older. When we get older, our body can't exactly reproduce the cells and do what it needs to do on a daily basis, like how it does now we're young and fruitful...

...My philosophy is you're only as young as you feel, or you're only as old as you feel, but personally I would say that caps at about 30 for me. That means to be stopped all of my bad habits so I could start working towards having a nice still fruitful life and when I'm 50.

18 - 30 / Medium / Heavy Smoker

# DRIVERS TO QUITTING

HEALTH

FITNESS /  
COSMETIC

COST

ROLE  
MODELLING /  
FAMILY

Almost universal understanding that **health** is an issue, but not always first mentioned – it's taken as a given, and this is enhanced in the context of the pandemic

“Even though I'm only 19, I'm waking up with a proper bad cough - all the stuff you associate with only affecting you later in life. I feel like the smoking is bringing that closer to where I am now. So it feels more of an urgent thing than I would think it should at this age.”

18 - 30 / Medium / Heavy Smoker

“I do know the health implications. Obviously, I don't want to end up in a position where I regret smoking because I've got lung cancer or COPD. So that that plays a factor. I used to work for the NHS and I know the pressure that smoking can put on the NHS, and all the funding that goes into smoking cessation, and GPs giving those services for people to quit.”

18 - 30 / Light Smoker

“The pandemic's based around the lungs so it makes me feel really, really guilty that I still smoke. For health reasons I feel ashamed. My nan's got COPD, and she's now on her fourth booster, and she barely leaves the house. I can't help but think if people like us didn't quit earlier, the NHS might not be so overwhelmed with people on ventilators.”

18 - 30 / Light Smoker

# DRIVERS TO QUITTING

HEALTH

FITNESS /  
COSMETIC

COST

ROLE  
MODELLING /  
FAMILY

But longer-term, older smokers can feel the **damage is already done** – there's no point quitting now

Some are in **denial** and attempt to distance themselves from increased risks of health harms

“But with my Mum and my Nan, they've ended up with more health complications from stopping than they had before they stopped. They both ended up with COPD because they stopped smoking. They both stopped smoking then that happened, they seemed to be fine when they were smoking. I've smoked since I was 15, so why stop now – it's just part of life now.”

18 – 30 / Light Smoker

“The damage is already done in my view. I don't think it's gonna make that much of a difference if I stop now.”

51 – 65 / Light Smoker

“My boss who was 47 had a cough, and he never smoked, he was healthy and active. He had two weeks off work, and the third week we found out he had lung cancer - never smoked. Two or three months after that he was dead. I know, that's the norm, but you can get cancer, lung cancer just by living or by bad luck or genes.”

51 – 65 / Light / Medium Smoker

# DRIVERS TO QUITTING

HEALTH

FITNESS /  
COSMETIC

COST

ROLE  
MODELLING /  
FAMILY

The younger are more likely to talk about **fitness**, stamina and lung capacity, rather than longer term [older] illness

"I'd probably rather be an ex-smoker because I want to get fitter and it really affects my cardio."

18 - 30 / Light Smoker

"I'm restricting my ability to run further or last longer, stamina wise. So I have short term regret and frustration, as well as the longer-term health implications."

18 - 30 / Light / Medium Smoker

"I'm training to be a PT at the moment, it made me realise I want to be in peak condition to be able to teach people, but also not be a hypocrite. If I wanted to teach someone about how smoking is bad for you, I couldn't then just nip off and have a fag."

18 - 30 / Medium / Heavy Smoker

"I've got health concerns - lower energy, more lethargic, lung capacity. I was getting into running and smoking does not complement running in any way. If you're trying to improve your performance, you can't smoke and run long distance, it just can't be done."

31 - 50 / Medium Smoker

## DRIVERS TO QUITTING

HEALTH

FITNESS /  
COSMETIC

COST

ROLE  
MODELLING /  
FAMILY

Some [of all ages] mention skin, cosmetic and dental appearance

**"I'm quite into looking after my skin. I just always noticed that it's really not great for your skin. I don't want to do any damage that I have to go under a knife to sort out. I'm conscious of looking old before my time."**

31 -50 / Medium Smoker

**"Skin is a big one that I think a lot of young people don't realise, but I do now that I'm getting older."**

31 -50 / Medium / Heavy Smoker

**"I don't want to have no teeth."**

18 - 30 / Medium / Heavy Smoker

# DRIVERS TO QUITTING

HEALTH

FITNESS /  
COSMETIC

COST

ROLE  
MODELLING /  
FAMILY

Cost tops the list for many - **day-to-day finances** are top of mind

View that 'you'll always find the money for cigarettes'

Some project what could be done with potential savings

Cost less relevant for those on roll ups / smoking illicit tobacco

"It's so expensive and I feel guilty when I don't have enough money for something, but I've always got enough money for cigarettes."

31 -50 / Medium Smoker

"I actually did start putting the money aside that I'd spend on cigarettes. That lasted for about two weeks and then I spent it on something nice."

51 -65 / Medium / Heavy Smoker

"Monzo will tell you how much you spent this week, and how much I spent on cigarettes - that makes me want to quit the most."

51 -65 / Light / Medium Smoker

"The same amount you spend on food, you probably spend about half of that on smoking. So you're freeing up a lot of your income if you're looking to save or make investments."

18 - 30 / Light Smoker

"Luckily, we've got friends that travel down to Spain and a mate of mine who goes overseas and brings back some cheapies for us."

51 - 65 / Light / Medium Smoker

# DRIVERS TO QUITTING

HEALTH

FITNESS /  
COSMETIC

COST

ROLE  
MODELLING /  
FAMILY

**Disapproval from family and friends can have an impact**

**Younger parents feel that smoking away from their children will not be enough as they get older**

**“My partner hates it, and my son's getting older and I don't want him to see me smoking. Because I saw my parents smoking, and I'm sure that played a part of me picking it up at quite a young age. As a role model I don't want to smoke as he's getting older. I would love to quit.”**

18 - 30 / Light Smoker

**“Some of my friends don't smoke, and I want to feel more accepted and close to them. Whereas at the moment, it's a bit of a nuisance.”**

18 - 30 / Medium / Heavy Smoker

**“My boy has started getting to an age where he notices it - he's caught me in the garden and he won't stop talking about it. So I don't really enjoy it anymore.”**

31 - 50 / Light Smoker

# BARRIERS TO QUITTING

## FEAR OF THE VOID

All of the perceived 'benefits' of smoking are the barriers to quitting

Additionally, many fear **the hole** in their everyday lives that will be left by smoking

Recognition that that the battle will be with **habit** as well as **addiction**

Some fear missing out on the **social aspect**

Others worry about **weight gain**, increased **alcohol consumption**

Many fear the loss of their perceived coping mechanism, exacerbated by the added stress of quitting



# BARRIERS TO QUITTING

## MINDSET

**General agreement that you have to be in the right mindset, but little understanding, or perceivable pattern to when or how you get into that mind set**

"If you're not in the correct, correct mindset, then you're going to find an excuse or an obstacle to stop. Whether it's any kind of addiction, you have to have that motivation to begin with, to start and sustain. You're just going to stop at the first hurdle without it."

*51 - 65 / Medium / Heavy Smoker*

"I think you have to get in the mindset that this is something that you're going to do, not just like an annual ritual, I think you need to want to do it."

*51 - 65 / Medium / Heavy Smoker*

# QUITTING TRIGGERS

Hypothetical reasons to quit are easily given. But identifying what would *actually* trigger an attempt is more difficult for them. Most commonly mentioned were:

Pregnancy / starting a family

Health scares

Stigma

Specific dates

"I quit when I was pregnant. I didn't miss it at all. I didn't crave it, and I breastfed still not smoking. Then as soon as that was over, my friend was smoking and I said 'Let me see if I fancy a pull on that, I'm probably going to find it disgusting'. I did it and now I'm smoking again. I'm smoking more than I did before I was pregnant."

*18 - 30 / Light / Medium Smoker*

"I had my first son and that made me stop. I didn't really want to be smoking around my son at that time.

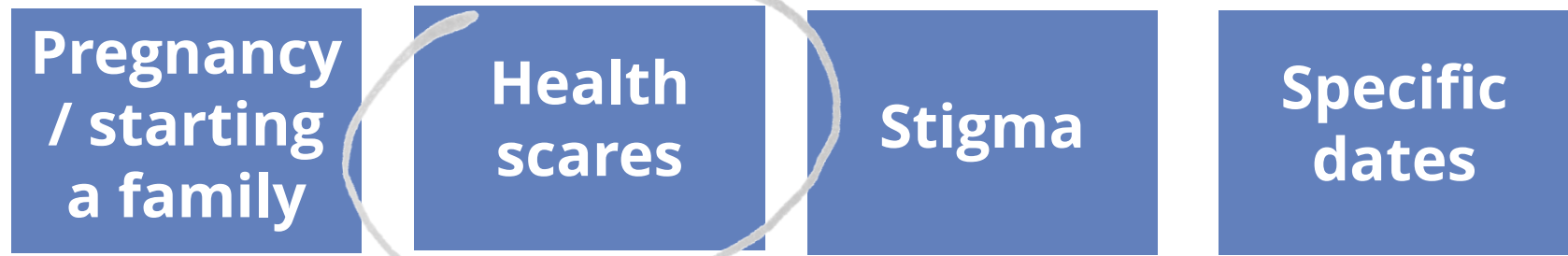
*51-65 / Medium / Heavy Smoker*

# QUITTING TRIGGERS

"I think the real scary time was I had a coughing fit when I was working with two paramedics. They said I was going blue. We thought we was going to end up working on you."

51-65 / Medium / Heavy Smoker

**Hypothetical reasons to quit are easily given. But identifying what would actually trigger an attempt is more difficult for them. Most commonly mentioned were:**



"I had a chest infection, tonsillitis, and the flu which hit me like a three-pronged attack. I couldn't smoke at that point because I was finding it hard to breathe and I was as sick as a dog. So when I came out of that, I attempted to give up smoking and I did for a while."

31 - 50 / Light / Medium Smoker

"When I had a certain medical condition, the consultant said 'Are you smoking 100 a day?' because the condition was so bad. I said, 'No, I'm doing 40.' At that point, I cut down to 10, as I thought, if it's proportional that 40 equals 100, then I've got to cut down."

51 - 65 / Light / Medium Smoker

All my friends that have successfully quit have unfortunately had a health scare. It was a cancer or it was a heart attack - then they quit.

51-65 / Medium / Heavy Smoker

# QUITTING TRIGGERS

Hypothetical reasons to quit are easily given. But identifying what would actually trigger an attempt is more difficult for them. Most commonly mentioned were:

Pregnancy / starting a family

Health scares

Stigma

Specific dates

"I had a job where every time I needed to go for a cigarette break, my boss was on my back, 'have you filled out your timesheet?' It was just so much hassle, and it caused me to feel really conscious. It was really unpleasant and I thought, I can't live my life like this. So I actually quit for about six months until I found a job where it wasn't an issue. So that was my trigger point, it was an inconvenience, and it was causing me to feel victimised."

*51 - 65 / Medium / Heavy Smoker*

“ On holiday I said that I didn't want to smoke because the friends that were going don't smoke.

*18-30 / Medium / Heavy Smoker*

# QUITTING TRIGGERS

**STOP TOBER**

SMOKE FREE  
ONE YOU

High awareness of Stoptober, but dismissive attitudes and low belief in success rates prevail

"I feel like the language is so condescending. Stoptober. So what everybody's gonna wake up on the 1st of bloody October and be like, 'Oh, it's October, I'm going to stop!' That's not how life works. All of us here have got different things going on in our lives, on the 1st of October, we would have all been in different places. So I just think it's ignorant."  
*31-50 / Light Smoker*

Hypothetical reasons to quit are easily given. But identifying what would actually trigger an attempt is more difficult for them. Most commonly mentioned were:

Pregnancy / starting a family

Health scares

Stigma

Specific dates

"Historically, I would always try to give up on New Year's Eve and start on a clean sheet on New Year's Day, but it never really worked. By day three, I'd broken my pledge. So yeah, I don't think that that actually works. But if there was like the motivation or things tools to help you, I think you stand more of a chance of success."

*51 - 65 / Medium / Heavy Smoker*

"My motivation for stopping is that I'll be 60 next year, I've think I've got to the crossroads that if I don't do it, I'm never gonna do it as like, I've watched my dad die of it."

*51 - 65 / Medium / Heavy Smoker*

I'm somebody who uses these breaks or landmarks dates, like New Year's, New Year's resolution. It's a mechanism to try and have a clean start.

*18-30 / Light / Medium Smoker*

**STOP  
SMOKING**

**LONDON**



# SUPPORT IN QUITTING



# QUIT METHODS

**Most who have tried, have tried more often than not without help**

**For some, each attempt is a learning process, with the experience shaping the approach for the next attempt**

"I know I'm not gonna just stop because that will make you go crazy. So normally, where I'm smoking like a pack a day, or give or take a pack and a bit, I'll just try to sort of wean myself off as best as possible as the weeks go on...I'll probably start around when the kids go back to school, I'll probably start then. And then sort of just cut down like two, one day, and then just knock it down by two each day. Until I'm down to a sort of at least one to five a day, I'm not pulling my hair out. And then once I've knocked off that many, I feel like knocking off the five should be fine."

*18-30 Light / Medium Smoker, Asian*

**Some scepticism about 'support'; for many it doesn't cross their mind**

"No, because I think it's got to be about you. And we all know, you know, somebody that's managed it. Because I think ultimately, it's about willpower. And I'll be the first to admit that I haven't got a lot of willpower, which is obviously why I've failed so many times. I don't think it's anything to do with any other product that I have tried or haven't tried. I don't think I have got enough willpower to pursue it"

*51-65 Medium / Heavy Smoker*



# QUIT METHODS

## COLD TURKEY vs. CUTTING DOWN

“ I just went cold turkey. I didn't patches or anything like that. I just went from smoking one day to not the next then stayed like that for nine years. I think you have to be mentally in the right zone to want to give up.

51-65 / Light / Smoker ”

**Cold turkey is perceived to be one of the most difficult methods, but one of the most effective if you're 'mentally ready'. Though reports of feeling agitated are common**

“Outright stopping cold turkey worked for about six months. But I was really irritable, I was difficult to be around. I just didn't really like myself, I was nasty, I felt stressed and agitated.”

31 - 50 / Medium Smoker

“Cold turkey is just an absolute killer. Everyone, and every little thing gets on your nerves.”

18 - 30 / Medium / Heavy Smoker

“I think to just stop and go cold turkey, I'm going to need help like patches, or gum.”

51 - 65 / Medium / Heavy Smoker

**Gradually cutting down is a method that most would try**

“I would just go through natural reduction.”

51 - 65 / Light / Medium Smoker

“ I just committed to cutting down by two in the first week, three in the second week. I literally weaned myself off like that. I knew that I had to phase it out of my world. I know that cold turkey doesn't work for me. It's just the same with diets, if you cut something out, your body starts to crave it so much more. By the time I got to two a day, I really just didn't want it. I think the scariest bit was just saying there's not going to be any more. And that's it. The boxes went to my best friend. That's it. We're done. And that week was the hardest week mentally and for my body as well. It was a lot of self control, but also being really realistic and kind to myself.

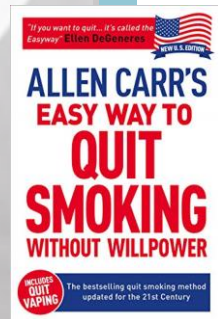
31 - 50 / Light Smoker ”

# QUIT SUPPORT

General agreement – when prompted - that methods of support are out there if wanted

Many quit aids and methods tried:

- Patches
- Gum
- Lozenges
- Mist
- Champix
- E-cigarettes
- Hypnotherapy
- Snacking
- Quitting with others



Mixed reviews for each of the methods  
Some have tried several; not succeeded with any  
Concern, experience, and rumours about negative  
side effects are common

"The chewing gum just tastes peppery. The patch just gave me a headache. I did the new spray on your tongue thing. That tastes minty, but nothing ever can really replicate smoking."

*31 - 50 / Medium / Heavy Smoker*

"When I gave up for nearly 18 months. I was on the chewing gum - probably ground my teeth down to zero. You probably look more ridiculous chewing gum all the time than having a fag occasionally. At the moment I'm using lozenges and you put them under your lip and you look like you've got a small tumour there. Occasionally, they would stick your tongue and when you're talking there's white stuff on it... I've tried the patches as well but they leave red marks and then you forget to take them off and you have dreams all night."

*51 - 65 / Medium / Heavy Smoker*

Several mentions of the 'Allen Carr method'

"Apparently, the big success, which I haven't tried is the Alan Carr system of stopping smoking. Apparently if you read the book, you'll stop smoking."

*51 - 65 / Light / Medium Smoker*

# QUIT AIDS

## NICOTINE REPLACEMENT THERAPIES

“I've had the patches and they don't work, they irritated my skin terribly. I almost had the patches and a cigarette – they didn't help me stop smoking.”

*51-65 / Light / Medium Smoker*

### Efficacy of quit aids questioned, alongside dislike of the side effects, taste, cost, and potential addiction

“I had the patches and they made me sick. Then I got one of those plastic inhalers that you breathe through which helped me cut down a bit. But it didn't really last because it's nothing like a cigarette.”

*31 – 50 / Light Smoker*

“I've tried patches, and they just irritated me. I was just like, I need to get it off. The more I thought about the patch, the more I wanted a cigarette. With all of those things, you've got to be very strong willed to give up with those because none of them work for me.”

*18 – 30 / Light / Medium Smoker*

“I tried the lozenges but they like worked out just as expensive as cigarettes.”

*18 – 30 / Medium / Heavy Smoker*

“I use the Nicorette gum and the mists. What drew me to those was the fact that it said you'd get hours of nicotine and you wouldn't be tempted but actually they were hopeless.”

*18 – 30 / Medium / Heavy Smoker*

“Some friends of ours gave up a decade ago, and tried to get us onto the gum, it didn't work for us. But they're still taking two to four milligrams of nicotine in chewing gum a day. So they've just replaced it with another habit.”

*51 – 65 / Light / Medium Smoker*

“The gum is oh, gosh, revolting!”

*51 – 65 / Light / Medium Smoker*

# QUIT AIDS

## 'CHAMPIX' TABLETS

I don't really take any kind of pills paracetamol, ibuprofen unless I've broken my arm or something. But then I probably won't even have been to hospital. Bones have been broken and I don't even take painkillers just because I try and keep my body in the best shape as possible. The only detriment I do to it is smoking. And if any, then I kind of enjoy that at the moment. So okay, the only pills going into my body are vitamins.

31-50 / Medium Smoker

### A lot of skepticism apparent – fear of ingesting unknown chemicals and concerns over secondary addiction

"What is it? What does it do? What am I putting inside of me that is making me not want nicotine? What is the point of substituting one bad thing for another?"

18 - 30 / Medium / Heavy Smoker

"If they're strong you could become then addicted to those, there's got to be something in the tablet to replace the nicotine. So what's to say you're not going to get addicted to that."

18 - 30 / Light / Medium Smoker

### Multitude of anecdotal accounts or rumours of negative side effects – feeling unwell, vivid nightmares

"Apparently they make you feel completely an utterly awful! Like physically ill when you smoke, and you get terrible nightmares."

51 - 65 / Medium / Heavy Smoker

"The idea of the pill is that you actually feel so ill having a cigarette that you don't do it. So it's not easy. So we'll have the side effects of withdrawal."

51 - 65 / Medium / Heavy Smoker

"It gives you really vivid dreams - bad stories about that sort of thing. I'd rather carry on smoking than have these bad dreams."

51 - 65 / Light Smoker

"It made my friend so poorly that they had like five days off work."

18 - 30 / Light / Medium Smoker

# QUIT AIDS

## 'CHAMPIX' TABLETS

**But there are some success stories, and some who like the sound of taking Champix compared to NRT products**

"That is the way my friend gave up. So that worked for him."

*51 - 65 / Medium / Heavy Smoker*

"I don't like the idea of being drip fed nicotine through a patch into my blood system. I know people that got addicted to Nicorette gum and I don't understand why anyone would want to take that up as a hobby. It's like the new version of chewing tobacco, I just can't get my head around wanting to enjoy chewing nicotine flavoured gum. But the idea of taking a tablet that just takes away the urge to smoke appeals to me."

*51 - 65 / Light Smoker*

**Others have doubts over the efficacy, and some experience of lack of availability and failed quit attempts**

"I spoke to a nurse before and they prescribed Champix, but I think it went out the window after a week or something."

*31 - 50 / Light Smoker*

"I rang the stop smoking NHS department and said I'm interested in using the tablets but she said they're not being delivered into the UK until late autumn. So I couldn't get onto that quit programme."

*51 - 65 / Light Smoker*

"Unless the GP gave me something to smoke to phase out the habit and the nicotine addiction, I don't think it would work."

*18 - 30 / Light Smoker*

"I didn't want to go down the Champix route. Because at least with nicotine patches, they're just patches and nicotine. But what's in the medication? I don't want to be swallowing a pill to quit smoking. That was a bit one step too far and it's got a lot of side effects from what I've heard about it, and I just don't want to risk it."

*18 - 30 / Light Smoker*

# QUIT METHODS

## OTHER METHODS

Hypnotherapy

\*

Snacking

\*

Quitting with  
others

### Few mentioned hypnotherapy – and mostly regarding friend's/family's experience

"My wife went to a hypnotist and was so put off by the hypnotist turning the pages in their script that, you know, I think I think she lasted about an hour and three quarters before she lit up again."

*51 – 65 / Light / Medium Smoker*

"My auntie went to a hypnotist to quit smoking. I think it worked for her. But I don't necessarily think I would go and do it."

*18 – 30 / Medium / Heavy Smoker*

### Some tried replacing the habit with other habits like the hand to mouth action of snacking

"I've tried eating loads. I literally carried snacks around with me - every time I wanted a cigarette I would snack instead, it was that sort of hand to mouth action. You know, like chewing a pen. It helped - I was hardly smoking at all, but I just ballooned in weight."

*18 – 30 / Medium / Heavy Smoker*

### Others made a pact to quit with friends or family

"When I quit the secret was to get a vape - my husband and I both did it. So the support network was there, and we stayed away from people who were smoking until we felt confident that we could vape with someone who smoked and not want a cigarette."

*18 – 30 / Light / Medium Smoker*



# STOP SMOKING SERVICES

Generally, there's a **widespread lack of awareness** and even less experience with local smoking cessation services and what they offer

**Most know they can turn to their GP or pharmacist for advice – but few have an idea of what to expect or where they would be signposted**

"Some of the chemists I've seen say if you want to stop smoking, come in and ask - and the GP."

*51 - 65 / Light Smoker*

"I didn't know what they provide."

*18 - 30 / Medium / Heavy Smoker*

"The GP would probably be the only place that I would really know of."

*31 - 50 / Light / Medium Smoker*

"I've only seen posters up in pharmacists. But I don't know what it actually involves."

*51 - 65 / Medium / Heavy Smoker*

**Some expect to be signposted to a website, app, support group or helpline – or to be offered free access to NRT products**

"At the GP I've seen if you want advice about smoking, you can contact the doctor and it said it included a support group."

*51 - 65 / Medium / Heavy Smoker*

**But there are some negative perceptions of the 'tone' of the advice**

Whenever I've seen the NHS do 'Give up smoking', I just find it really patronising. I feel like they're talking to me like I'm a baby, do you want to stop smoking? We've got a helpline blahdy Blandy blah.

*31 - 50 / Light Smoker*

# STOP SMOKING SERVICES

## CONVERSATIONS WITH HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

### GP enquiries about smoking are the norm and are expected – and to some extent welcome

#### Smokers can find it difficult to be honest

“I just always lie because I haven't been ready to want to talk to someone about that.”

*31 – 50 / Medium / Heavy Smoker*

“Are they ever gonna get a straight answer as to how much you do smoke or drink? Probably not.”

*51 – 65 / Light / Medium Smoker*

#### Tone should be empathetic, supportive, not pressuring

“Makes me feel a little bit guilty at times. As every time I was like, ‘Yeah, I'm thinking about quitting’. But you just come back next time and nothing's changed.”

*51 – 65 / Light Smoker*

“I always get the questions around alcohol and smoking - how many units you drink a day and how much you smoke, at almost every kind of consultation I have. It's always at the heart of the NHS. It gets a bit repetitive and I feel like it loses its empathy - I feel like they lose the care about you quitting, because it's just become part of the protocol.”

*31 – 50 / Medium / Heavy Smoker*

#### Conversations could be less technical & more meaningful

“It was more them checking to see if the smoking was affecting my health, rather than being like, ‘Is there a reason why you started smoking?’ But they're helpful in signposting me where I need to go.”

*18 – 30 / Light / Medium Smoker*

“Instead of asking, how many cigarettes and units did you drink? If they asked, Why do you drink? And why do you smoke? I think the response you'd get would be more meaningful.”

*31 – 50 / Medium / Heavy Smoker*

#### Enquiries about smoking should be relevant...

#### ....perception smoking can be used as a ‘scapegoat

“With GPs, a lot of the time they use it as a cop out. It's like, Oh, you smoke, so this is obviously the cause of whatever is wrong with you. It's not just with smoking either... It just sort of feels like they try and find a cop out to not deal with the root issue some of the time.”

*31 – 50 / Medium / Heavy Smoker*



# STOP SMOKING SERVICES

## GROUP SETTING

The concept of a support group was really well received – and often suggested spontaneously  
The idea of ‘**all being in it together**’ really appealed - everybody gets what you’re going through, you’re **not alone**, and you can all **motivate each other**

“Why don't you start a group called ‘cut and run’, cut as in quit and run as in group sport!”

*51 – 65 / Medium / Heavy Smoker*

“I've just been through a COVID Support Scheme because I had long-COVID and it does help - it makes you feel better - you'd be surprised. If everyone in the group wants to quit then I think you can support each other and it would actually work. Like alcohol anonymous, they've always worked in the past for people. It could be called something like smokers anonymous.”

*51 – 65 / Medium / Heavy Smoker*

“I think a group would be better than one-on-one, because you'd spur each other on. It's a bit like going to weight watchers. If it's a group of you, you can all bring something different to the plate.”

*51 – 65 / Medium / Heavy Smoker*

“I think if you can idea share, bounce ideas off each other – something that somebody else has found works for them. And you might think, ‘Oh, I could try that.’ But when you're on your own, it does feel a bit isolating.”

*51 – 65 / Medium / Heavy Smoker*

It's not something you're going to be able to tackle on your own. Unless you suddenly wake up one morning with ultimate willpower, but I don't think most of us around here will have that.

*51 – 65 / Medium / Heavy Smoker*

# STOP SMOKING SERVICES

## GROUP SETTING

### Some concerned that group leader wouldn't have lived experience of smoking / quitting

"Unless the person who's leading the groups and the cessation clinic, is actually a smoker, they won't understand the trials and the tribulations we're gonna go through. And so it's like, 'oh, you must stop, all the evidence shows so'. I just don't think they will be empathetic enough."

*51 - 65 / Light / Medium Smoker*

"If you go to these clinics, they've probably never smoked in their life. And they're telling you to give up. It's like, I personally don't drink alcohol, so I can't say to someone, you must give it up. Because I don't know how it feels, because I'm not a drinker. It'd be the same with them, if they've never smoked. How can they tell us all just give it up?"

*51 - 65 / Medium / Heavy Smoker*

### But others feel the benefits of support group of likeminded people is enough

"Something like this will work pretty well, rather than just like a Facebook group or Whatsapp group. Something like this would definitely help a lot of people, especially because some people haven't got people to talk to at all. It creates a whole different element to it - it doesn't have to just be a place where everybody quit smoking - it can be somewhere where people who haven't got many friends could go and find people with similar interests."

*18 - 30 / Medium / Heavy Smoker*

"It's knowing that I have to be somewhere, knowing that I could speak to someone who wasn't judging me."

*18 - 30 / Light / Medium Smoker*



# STOP SMOKING SERVICES

## GROUP SETTING

**Smokers had mixed preferences about in-person Vs virtual group. Some felt that you need to be in-person to convey genuine empathy and to be held accountable**

“I think it needs to be in person.. You need to look into the eyes of people face-to-face for this.”

*51 - 65 / Medium / Heavy Smoker*

“If you're in-person you can work as a team and help each other, whereas Zoom is very remote. An online group setting is great, but that that closeness helps - that support is right there. Online it's not the same.”

*18 - 30 / Light / Medium Smoker*

**Others feel so accustomed to online meetings that they would prefer not to leave the house**

“If it was online then maybe, but I wouldn't physically go to a group.”

*18 - 30 / Light / Medium Smoker*

“I wouldn't mind being on Zoom. I've kind of got used to do this for other things - keeping in touch with people and things like that.”

*51 - 65 / Medium / Heavy Smoker*

**Although procrastination could be an issue**

“Online you'd be too distracted by other things - you're more likely to procrastinate online.”

*31 - 50 / Light / Medium Smoker*

“You could do that over Zoom - that's not a bad idea. Then you could share stories - one person might say I did it through cutting down. Another person might say, I did it with nicotine gum. You kind of brainstorm it slightly, and hopefully you get something out of it.”

*51 - 65 / Light / Medium Smoker*

# STOP SMOKING SERVICES

## CHAT FORUM

### For some, a chat forum group would be enough to satisfy the desire to be amongst others in the same situation

"I'm not saying replicate AA meetings, but some kind of chat forum. So positive messages from your peers who've successfully kicked it, so you can learn from them. I do look at a lot of forums for other subjects."

*51 - 65 / Medium / Heavy Smoker*

"I've always felt that I've always been alone when I'm quitting and embarking on that journey - it can be quite daunting. No community out there or anything like a Facebook group. When you make certain milestones like five days, you will want to share that with someone. But people that still smoke, they're not really gonna care. But if you're part of a group, where everybody made it five days together, you could have an online Zoom party. For certain milestones like that, I feel there's nothing out there."

*18 - 30 / Medium / Heavy Smoker*

"Sometimes just talking to a stranger about any problem that you may have just relieves that weight off your shoulders, knowing that it's not going to be the next person that you walk past in the street. Sometimes it's just that knowing you can contact somebody and be able to talk to somebody, rather than seeing something written in front of you."

*18 - 30 / Light / Medium Smoker*

"It's good to have something that's portable - the idea of a face-to-face group isn't really appealing. I'd rather just do something online, or have it with me, so you don't have to actually go there and take more time out of your day, you can just see it."

*31 - 50 / Medium / Heavy Smoker*

# STOP SMOKING SERVICES

## MENTORING

**A mentoring or buddying-up scheme also appealed to several, for the same reasons as the support group – having someone to turn to and learn from**

“Being paired up or matched with somebody that's got the same sort of lifestyle as I have. And hearing their stories would be the most helpful.”

*18 – 30 / Light / Medium Smoker*

“When I meet people that have quit I always last a few more days longer. When we talk about things I feel more inspired, and more accountable for that.”

*31 – 50 / Medium / Heavy Smoker*

“It's easier to talk to someone that you don't know personally. Even if you buddied up with someone and you might be able to send a text saying you don't need that cigarette. Just a little bit of motivation - a few words of kindness.”

*51 – 65 / Medium / Heavy Smoker*

**I think the people element of encouragement probably is a good thing.**

*51 – 65 / Light / Medium Smoker*

“Having somebody at the end of the phone or the end of a tablet to be able to talk to, to persuade you, or reassure you, might be a good avenue to go down for people that don't have that support network around them.”

*18 – 30 / Light / Medium Smoker*

“I like the term buddy, sometimes you're paired with a buddy for various things, it's very supportive... you're sort of bigging each other up. I think it's lovely.”

*51 – 65 / Medium / Heavy Smoker*

“When you're kind of interacting with someone it's a bit more believable than reading their story on a storyboard. If you are interacting with this person, you get back a rapport with them.”

*18 – 30 / Medium / Heavy Smoker*

**When I had given up, I had a life coach, I would speak to once a month, and what kept me going is that I didn't want to have to tell him that I'd smoked. So every time I went to him and said, ‘I haven't smoked again, this month’, I would feel really good with myself. It was the fact that I had to report it. When he left, and I didn't find someone else, I started smoking again.**

*31 – 50 / Light Smoker*

# STOP SMOKING SERVICES

## APP

**Generally more experience of using The Smoke Free app than any other service, but with mixed reviews and perceptions**

"I did download an app where it told you every day, 'You're fantastic. You haven't had a cigarette for five days.' It actually worked quite well... But I sometimes caught myself lying. But then it would say, 'well done, your respiratory breathing rate is this much better than it was yesterday'."

*51 - 65 / Medium / Heavy Smoker*

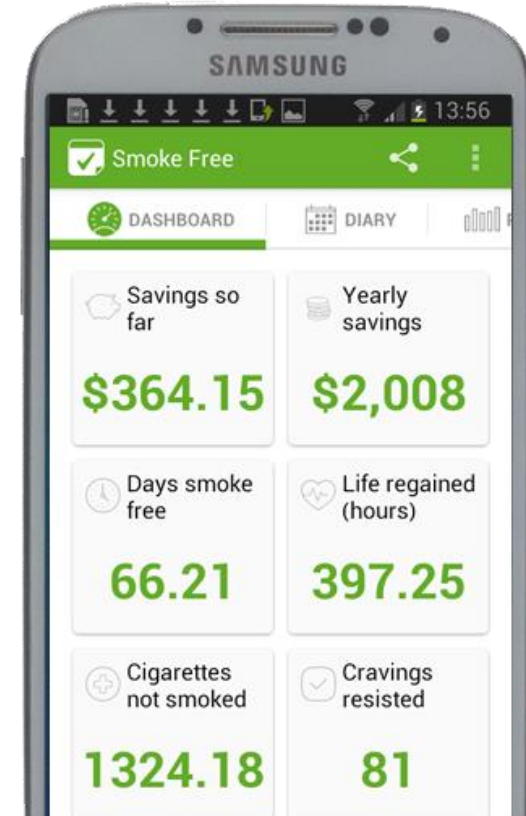
**The positive reward notifications appealed to many**

"The daily reminders of how much you've accomplished in the day is good, for sure. Everyone carries their phone everywhere with them. A reward daily would push you to keep going."

*31 - 50 / Medium / Heavy Smoker*

"If it's a goal setting app, and it's helping with reduction, and keeping that goal in mind keeping you focused on it, I don't think it's the worst possible idea."

*51 - 65 / Light / Medium Smoker*



"If you played upon the psychological thing, I think with me that would help. If there was like an app that said this is day five, and you haven't smoked 15 fags a day and it calculated by now you you've saved XYZ. And if there was something, in a not too shocking way, that said you've reduced your risk of this by XYZ. I think that would be positive."

*51 - 65 / Medium / Heavy Smoker*

# STOP SMOKING SERVICES

## APP

**The low effort required to “take part” in an app, compared to a support group was another positive for some**

“I think an app would probably help me more. But I could just log onto my phone and look at rather than going through the effort of like joining an online group.”

*18 - 30 / Light / Medium Smoker*

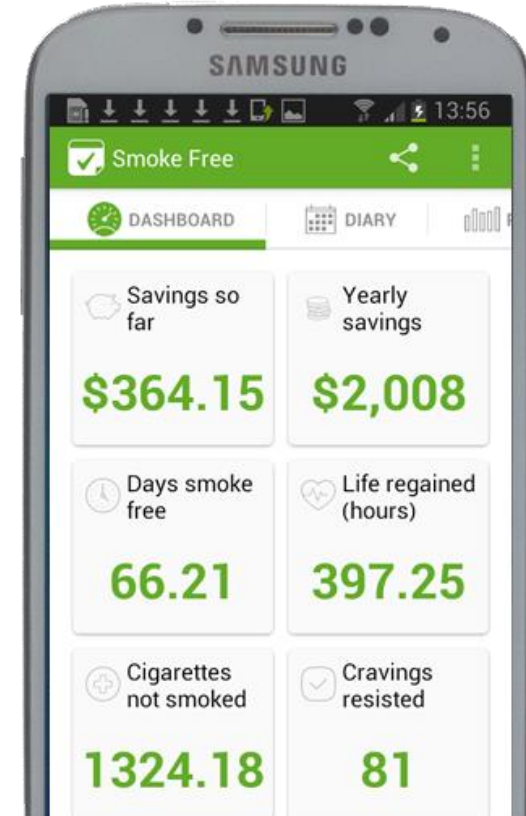
“We track so many things on our phones now. Like to do with health as well. That sounds like a really good idea.”

*31 - 50 / Medium / Heavy Smoker*

**It was also suggested that the community element of a support group, chat forum or mentoring scheme, that was so well received, could be included in an app**

“You could log if you smoked, and if you haven’t there’s a counter, and then you’re always going to remember but having it there on the screen will help. If your friends downloaded the app with you, then they could also upload and share their stats as well. Then you can maybe try and beat them too. There could be a rewards scheme for smokers, like 10 pound off here or something like that, for reaching certain milestones for the month - you get 25% off of your shopping at Tesco, some something like that, that incentivises us to continue it.”

*18 - 30 / Medium / Heavy Smoker*



# STOP SMOKING SERVICES

## APP

**But some expect or found the messages to not be compelling enough**

"The messages are just like well done. I was still smoking and I was like, Okay, thank you. It was really minimal, not that convincing."

*31 - 50 / Light Smoker*

"I think notifications from an app are a bit gimmicky. I'm not sure if it would work for me."

*51 - 65 / Medium / Heavy Smoker*

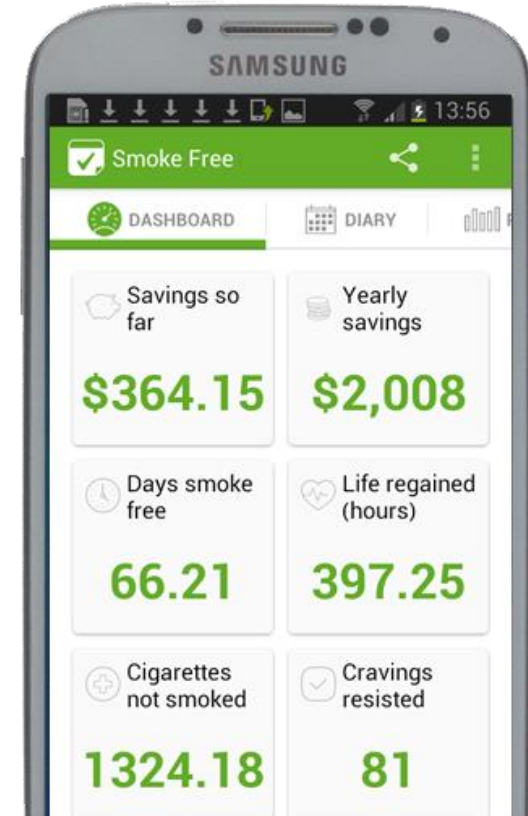
"It's all about self control. It might be like, there's a button to press when you really want a cigarette, and it'll send you some message saying, 'Oh, calm down over there', well, you're gonna have a cigarette, aren't you. So I don't know if those kind of things work, I think it really is an internal switch for a smoker."

*51 - 65 / Light Smoker*

**Concerns about app reminders having the opposite to desired effect**

“It might remind you that you haven't had a cigarette and then trigger you to have another one. So it might have an adverse effect.”

*51 - 65 / Light Smoker*



# STOP SMOKING SERVICES

## APP

### Other issues raised include the app not being personal enough...

"I think it's gonna be an automated robot thing. Because it's free... I would kind of expect it to be quite generic, because it's gonna be it's a machine. It's just like talking to a web chat - before you get put through to actual person, it gives you these generic answers and facts. I don't know if it's gonna be anything personalised, which I think is actually what you probably need."

*31 - 50 / Light Smoker*

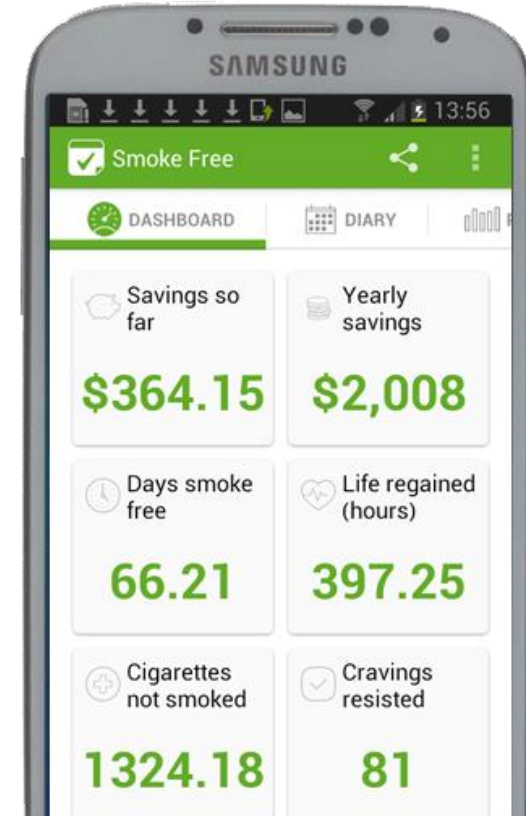
"It's not even a person, or my GP telling me it's a bloody a machine."

*51 - 65 / Light / Medium Smoker*

### ..and what happens when the novelty of the app wears off?

"You get to that point in the app and it loses its wow factor, and its just another app."

*18 - 30 / Light / Medium Smoker*



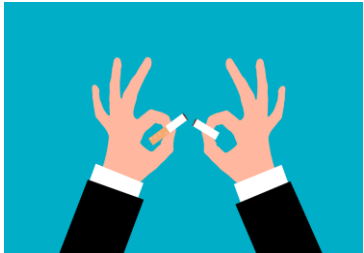
“It was good to start with, it tells you that you're 100 days smoke free. But then the novelty wore off, and it was just like just another app in my phone.”

*18 - 30 / Light / Medium Smoker*

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# UNSUCCESSFUL QUITTING



# UNSUCCESSFUL QUIT ATTEMPTS

**Many feel it's to be expected, but that doesn't mean it has no impact; consensus that it is demotivating**

"When it doesn't work I get a bit disheartened by it and then can't be bothered trying again to be honest. It's just like, why bother? Because I know I'm not gonna be able to do it. So I'll just continue smoking."

*51 - 65 / Light Smoker*

"To me it doesn't make sense in my head, the idea that the more times I've tried to quit, the more likely I am to be successful in quitting. Because I've tried and I've failed and I've failed and I've failed. So it just doesn't make sense."

*18 - 30 / Light / Medium Smoker*

"I think the more trying to quit is sort of normalised or the more frequent you try, and the more frequent you fail. Then it becomes a bit of the same old same old for me."

*18 - 30 / Light / Medium Smoker*

**Others feel slightly more comfortable knowing it's to be expected, and some even feel like smoking-quitting-smoking is cyclical, and you can always learn from previous attempts**

"Probably don't feel as bad as you'd think. It's kind of crap, because I tried. But it feels nice to smoke again."

*18 - 30 / Medium / Heavy Smoker*

"A sense of brief disappointment. But then it's kind of understandable. So you can justify it a little bit."

*18 - 30 / Medium / Heavy Smoker*

"I'm not particularly worried about it. I think giving up might even become part of a natural cycle. So it could happen in the future. That's my personal philosophy."

*51 - 65 / Light Smoker*

"There are things that I could probably do better the next time I tried to quit, and situations that I can keep myself away from that will make me more want to smoke. You learn what works and what you shouldn't do again, so it helps."

*18 - 30 / Medium / Heavy Smoker*

# UNSUCCESSFUL QUIT ATTEMPTS



There's another part of me - there's like a devil and an angel on my shoulder all the time. That's literally how it is every single day, like 'We're 41 we can do what we like, we're a grown woman live your life. You can have a cigarette'. But the other voice is like, 'Don't do it we've come so far'. Literally have to commit every single day, that if I get through this day, we've done another day. I do feel like I've got the mental bit talking to the addiction - you feel like you need it, you actually chemically need it, because you've had it for so long. And then it's a mental thing that when your body stops needing it your brain starts being like, 'Oh, no, husband just pissed you off. Should we go out for a fag?'.

*31 - 50 / Light Smoker*

# RELAPSING: THE CAUSES

POST  
PREGNANCY

WEIGHT GAIN

STRESSFUL  
EVENT /  
ANXIETY

SOCIAL  
INFLUENCE

ILLNESS  
RECOVERY

“As a mother, when you want to start a family, it's really easy to just stop because you're thinking about protecting your baby. But then on your own, even though you know all the bad things you're doing to yourself and all the reasons why it's bad for you - the money, the health, the smell, you still do it anyway. I don't understand the logic. You can just drop it like that for a baby, but start again straight away when it's just yourself.”

*51 - 65 / Light Smoker*

“When I'm not well, I do cut down - I don't smoke at all. But then the minute I'm healed, unfortunately off I go and buy a packet.”

*51 - 65 / Light / Medium Smoker*



# RELAPSING: THE CAUSES

POST  
PREGNANCY

WEIGHT GAIN

STRESSFUL  
EVENT /  
ANXIETY

SOCIAL  
INFLUENCE

ILLNESS  
RECOVERY

“Years ago, about 12 years ago, I literally just went cold turkey. And I think I put on about two stone in a matter of three months. And then I woke up one morning and thought, bugger this I'd rather smoke than be fat.”

*51 - 65 / Light / Medium Smoker*

**Can be being amongst smokers, or a 'smoking' situation**

“I went back home to my Mums, but she's a chain smoker. And she just smoked and smoked and smoked in front of me. Because I was sitting right next to it, it was so much harder to just be like, 'No'.”

*18 - 30 / Medium / Heavy Smoker*

“Or I'm just smoking because I have a drink. I've been quite successful with quitting in the past. But like pressure, it's always when I ever go for a drink. It starts again. And I've never been able to shift that off.”

*18 - 30 / Light Smoker*

# RELAPSING: THE CAUSES

## POST PREGNANCY

"I got pregnant and then that's why I quit. But then their Daddy passed, so then I started smoking again."

*51 - 65 / Light Smoker*

## WEIGHT GAIN

"It was a stressful thing going on at work and that triggered me - anything stressful makes me want to go and get a fag."

*18 - 30 / Medium / Heavy Smoker*

## STRESSFUL EVENT / ANXIETY



"Four years ago I started smoking because I went through a breakup. And then my first thing was, I'm stressed, I need a cigarette."

*18 - 30 / Light / Medium Smoker*

## SOCIAL INFLUENCE

"A stressful moment happened in my life, which kind of triggered me back into smoking again."

*18 - 30 / Light / Medium Smoker*

## ILLNESS RECOVERY

"I got into an argument at work, it literally turned into a shouting match, things got heated - the pot boiled over. I just went outside and I didn't go back to work that day. I saw the guys outside having a cigarette - it was the best moment of release. It did feel good."

*18 - 30 / Medium / Heavy Smoker*

"My anxiety had kicked in quite bad. And as opposed to using the vape, I just thought cigarettes, and I went to the shop and I bought a packet and haven't stopped."

*18 - 30 / Light / Medium Smoker*

"I stopped smoking a year before we tried starting for a family... But roll forward years later, I'm divorcing that man. With stress and starting again with someone who smokes more than me."

*51 - 65 / Light Smoker*

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# FUTURE QUITTING



# FUTURE QUITTING PLANS

Most are at least considering quitting in the future – although **few actually have concrete plans** – they find it difficult to commit to a specific time

"I've got to, I've got to commit to it."

*31 – 50 / Light Smoker*

"I always find an excuse - it's Christmas and I associate it so much with going out but I would really like to... but I just can't get it straight in my head as to when that would be."

*31 – 50 / Medium Smoker*

"If I've got cancer, or if I broke up with my partner who smokes, then I might try and give up but I just don't see it happening in the immediate future."

*51 – 65 / Light Smoker*

"I would be open to. I don't think I would want to be smoking long term."

*51 – 65 / Light / Medium Smoker*

"I have definitely thought about quitting at times, so yeah I would like to quit, it is not something I rule out completely."

*31 – 50 / Heavy Smoker, Polish*

But there are some who are sure they do **not** want to quit...

**...because it's going to be too hard**

"I've got it in my head that I will probably never give up - I find it too difficult. I'm just not even thinking about it, because I've had trouble like quitting in the past. I just think well I don't smoke that much. So I'm just getting on with it."

*51 – 65 / Light Smoker*

**...or because they've been a smoker for so long they don't see the point**

"I feel that if I've got to this age, so I'll be okay, as long as I temper it and do not smoke too many. Maybe this conversation will spur me on to try again. But at the moment, I'm afraid I'll go buy a pack of cigarettes and smoke."

*51 – 65 / Light / Medium Smoker*

# FUTURE QUITTING PLANS

**Of those who do have plans – the majority want to cut down gradually for fear that going cold turkey would either be too difficult or would only make you crave something else**

“My goal is to slowly reduce so that then I actually feel that I'm not losing out on something. If I stopped smoking straight away, I'd have to do something else, whether it be drugs, drink, it'd be something, you got to enjoy yourself.”

*51 – 65 / Light / Medium Smoker*

“I don't think I could do it in one go. So it'll have to be reducing it slowly. Maybe even if I could cut down to like three to four. Then like completely go cold turkey from there.”

*18 – 30 / Medium / Heavy Smoker*

“Gradually, the amount of cigarettes I smoke a day will just slowly reduce. If I put too much pressure, it is a habit, so I wouldn't be able to just stop. I've been more successful if I just gradually slow down then trying to put a stop date to it.”

*31 – 50 / Medium / Heavy Smoker*

“I think reducing the amount I smoke is better, because quitting is quite like it's a brick wall, you stop and that's really quite hard, yeah? So if you take the attitude, I'm reducing down to zero. I'm in control, you know, it's something I can do when I want to, but it's my decision, and I'm in control. Whereas if you say I'm quitting, it seems all that puts me under more pressure - what am I missing? You know, it's like, oh, you've been a naughty boy, stop. And you always want to do what you're not meant to... So it's easier to say I'm reducing. And ultimately, I can reduce to zero, that's much more positive. Because I was, as I said, smoking 40 a day and I've reduced to 10. So it's within me. This was, what, four or five years ago. But I can do it now. And that's the point. It's our control. It's within us, I think.”

*51-65 / Light / Medium Smoker*

# FUTURE QUITTING PLANS

**As we've already seen, setting age milestones is common, so several plans revolve around getting to a certain age**

"By the time I'm 45 I'd like to stop smoking. I might have kids by then, and I want to be able to run around after them and not be coughing my guts up."

*31 - 50 / Light / Medium Smoker*

"I have a plan to try and quit before I'm 60. My plan is to start afresh in the new year. I've got to find the willpower to kick this once and for all. I'm halfway there, I've got my sensible head on. But the problem is my smoking head then takes over and I want another one."

*51 - 65 / Medium / Heavy Smoker*

"When I'm 30, I'll stop."

*18 - 30 / Light Smoker*

**With the New Year falling a month after fieldwork, it was a significant marker for some**

“Definitely in the New Year. I try and bookend the year, and think I screwed up a few things this year. Maybe I can start by dropping something or do something different next year.”

*31 - 50 / Light Smoker*

# FUTURE QUITTING PLANS

**A change in circumstance for some also feels like a good time to coincide with a quit attempt – be that moving house or starting a family**

“When I fall pregnant, I’ll give up 100%.”

*31 – 50 / Light / Medium Smoker*

“I’m going to be moving in with my partner in about a month. And she doesn’t smoke. So smoking in the house would be a no. It’s definitely going to help me cut down. I respect her a lot and I don’t want to make the house smell like cigarettes. So it’s only going to be positive for me. When I’m out I might still be smoking, but it’s definitely going to help reduce.”

*18 – 30 / Light Smoker*

**Many plan to replace the habit with something else and put the energy elsewhere**

“I’m going to focus on my fitness, and start going to the gym more regularly. Focus on my nutrition on and make sure my diet is important to me. So that then when I catch myself going to get have a cigarette, I’m like, what are you doing? You’re undoing all the progress you made?”

*18 – 30 / Medium / Heavy Smoker*

“I’ll go to the gym that will be my focus point.”

*31 – 50 / Light / Medium Smoker*

“I mainly smoke out of stress and boredom. So I’ll try to find other avenues to channel the stress, rather than going and having a cigarette .”

*18 – 30 / Medium / Heavy Smoker*



**STOP  
SMOKING**  
**LONDON**



# COMMS & MESSAGING



# QUITTING LANGUAGE

## ALL HAVE PROS AND CONS

QUITTING

\*

STOPPING

\*

REDUCING

\*

CUTTING  
DOWN

\*

GIVING UP

\*

GOING CLEAN

**'Quitting'** is perceived by several to sound harsh and final...

**... and can be associated with failure**

"Quitting sounds as though you're giving up something but in a bad way. So I don't really use quitting. I would use giving up."

*51 - 65 / Medium / Heavy Smoker*

"Quitting seems really final."

*51 - 65 / Medium / Heavy Smoker*

"I think reducing the amount of smoke is better, because quitting is like a brick wall. It's my decision, and I'm in control... So it's easier to say I'm reducing. And ultimately, I can reduce to zero, that's much more positive."

*51 - 65 / Light / Medium Smoker*

**However, it is clearly subjective, and several felt 'quitting' is best**

"Quitting is a softer word - it's just more attractive in terms of what it means, stopping is quite severe and a more harsher approach."

*51 - 65 / Medium / Heavy Smoker*

"I prefer the term quit - it has a more positive feel."

*18-30 / Light Smoker, Polish*

"I think quitting is better than giving up because giving up sounds like its something nice you are stopping."

*18-30 / Heavy Smoker, Polish*

# QUITTING LANGUAGE

QUITTING

\*

STOPPING

\*

REDUCING

\*

CUTTING  
DOWN

\*

GIVING UP

\*

GOING CLEAN

## 'Stop' is perceived as less aggressive, but doesn't always seem final enough

"When it comes from the NHS, it tends to be stop smoking, and breathe easy. I think that the language is less aggressive. Whereas when it's a Nicorette advert, for example, it might be like 'quit now'. The language is not empathetic without acknowledgement or appreciation that this is going to be hard."

*31 - 50 / Light Smoker*

"You can stop and start, stop and start, whereas quit sounds much more final, compared to Stop which is like pause."

*18 - 30 / Light Smoker*

## 'Giving up' can be associated with letting go of something nice

"Yes, it's like saying giving up chocolate like you are giving up something nice."

*31-50 / Light Smoker, Asian*

## Some would rather talk about reduction

"It's less traumatic to cut down slowly down. If you told me I could never, ever smoke again, I'd panic. Cut down, that's more gentle, and I think for me would be the most positive thing."

*51 - 65 / Light / Medium Smoker*

## Some prefer to think of the life they are gaining, not giving up

"I like the word clean. If I'm to visualise myself, giving up smoking, I'm opting for the cleaner life. I also like stop and giving up they make sense. Quit, I just get this negative load with that word quitting. There's a lot of language around 'not being a quitter'. I know quitting is positive but still."

*51 - 65 / Medium / Heavy Smoker*

"I suppose if you wanted to take a positive way, you could say I am not going to quit smoking. I'm going to take up breathing fresh air oh, maybe aspiring."

*51 - 65 / Light Smoker*

# CAMPAIGN STATEMENTS

## ONE IN TWO SMOKERS WILL DIE EARLY FROM A SMOKING RELATED ILLNESS

**A shocking statistic for many – for some the impact works and they really take the message in**

“So it means that out of me and my partner, one of us are going to die from smoking. Is that what you’re saying?”

*31 – 50 / Light / Medium Smoker*

**Others couldn’t see past the negativity and find it demotivating**

**More entrenched smokers can become defensive and in denial**

“I think it sounds positive. One in two? That’s 50:50 right? I might be one of those that are alright!”

*31 – 50 / Light Smoker*

“I don't think any smoker actually thinks that they're going to be totally healthy throughout their lifespan. I think they realise that one way or the other, you're going to get something smoking related.”

*51 – 65 / Medium / Heavy Smoker*

**Some felt it sounds like something they have heard many times before - affecting its impact**

“It feels really overdone. It's been drilled into us from such a young age that it doesn't have an impact.”

*31 – 50 / Medium / Heavy Smoker*



# CAMPAIGN STATEMENTS

## IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO STOP SMOKING

### Perceived to be much more encouraging and positive

"That's good. That positive."

*51 - 65 / Light / Medium Smoker*

"Well, that's true. That's quite encouraging."

*51 - 65 / Medium / Heavy Smoker*

"It's giving you a choice. You're not being told something awful. But you know, it's never too late. Yes it's giving you a choice."

*51 - 65 / Light / Medium Smoker*

### But some left wanting more statistical detail

"You've got a dangle a carrot - within six months, the regeneration of XYZ takes place."

*51 - 65 / Medium / Heavy Smoker*

"That's where I need to hear extra health messages. Like if you give up at this point of your life, within 18 months, you can expect to whatever. I need the message loaded and spiked, because on its own that sounds a bit too folksy. It sounds like something that you might have muttered to you at a bus stop by a stranger."

*51 - 65 / Medium / Heavy Smoker*

### Younger smokers felt somewhat detached from the concept - to them it's too early to stop smoking

"I can see how it would appeal to people that are a bit older. But for me things like it's never too late. I'm like, Well, I'm only 26. so I hope not."

*31 - 50 / Medium / Heavy Smoker*

### And some outright disagreed with the statement - maybe reflecting denial again

"The longer you leave it, the harder it gets."

*31 - 50 / Light / Medium Smoker*

"If you die, it's too late."

*31 - 50 / Light / Medium Smoker*

"Can I say: it's better to stop smoking early?"

*51 - 65 / Light / Medium Smoker*

"If you've already got lung cancer then it is a bit darn late to give up smoking."

*51 - 65 / Light Smoker*

# CAMPAIGN STATEMENTS

## STOP SMOKING AND START SAVING

**Few were convinced by this statement, despite many having talked about cost being a driver to quit. It felt too generic to many, and not a strong enough message to encourage a quit attempt**

*"I don't think the financial gain of it is enough."*

*31 - 50 / Medium / Heavy Smoker*

*"Too obvious, I don't think you really need to hear it as a statement."*

*31 - 50 / Light / Medium Smoker*

*"People have different pockets. I don't know."*

*31 - 50 / Light Smoker*

**They agree with the concept of freeing up money, but not necessarily the saving aspect**

*"I'd only spend it on alcohol anyway."*

*51 - 65 / Light / Medium Smoker*

“

**I'm probably still gonna pay - I need another reason to quit.**

*18 - 30 / Light Smoker*

”



# CAMPAIGN STATEMENTS

## STOP SMOKING AND START MOVING

Generally, negatively received and considered offensive and ignorant by many who feel an assumption is made about smokers being inactive or having an unhealthy lifestyle

"It's offensive - I was going to the gym five times a week and still smoking."

*31 - 50 / Light Smoker*

"That's crazy. That assumption is so bad - that implies that people who smoke don't move!"

*31 - 50 / Light Smoker*

"It's suggesting that your whole lifestyle is really unhealthy. That you're overweight as well."

*51 - 65 / Light Smoker*

"It just makes you feel like because I smoke I'm not active. You can still do a sport or be active and smoke."

*31 - 50 / Medium / Heavy Smoker*

Therefore, it was considered irrelevant to many - particularly those who are currently active

"I'm moving already at the minute, so it's not really applicable."

*31 - 50 / Light / Medium Smoker*

"I jog four times a day and I smoke."

*31 - 50 / Medium / Heavy Smoker*

"I move anyway, I go to the gym. Just because you smoke you don't move?"

*51 - 65 / Light / Medium Smoker*

"I smoke and I move anyway?"

*18 - 30 / Medium / Heavy Smoker*

I think that one is a waste of time. That's more relevant to someone that's obese and eating too much and needs to get fit. Whereas a lot of smokers are quite physically active anyway.

*51 - 65 / Light Smoker*

One smoker suggested "Stop smoking and start living" instead



# CAMPAIGN STATEMENTS

## DON'T QUIT QUITTING

This resonated as many recognise quitting isn't black and white, it's an ongoing process

“

You'll get there in the end sort of thing. Yeah, I like that one.

*31 - 50 / Light / Medium Smoker*

”

However, many had issues with the language used – and needed to repeat it back to themselves before the message made sense

“It sounds like don't quit - the first thing you hear is don't quit.”

*18 - 30 / Medium / Heavy Smoker*

“It's two negatives. I feel like it cancels each other out - it gets confusing.”

*31 - 50 / Medium / Heavy Smoker*

“Bit of a mouthful.”

*18 - 30 / Light / Medium Smoker*

“The way it's said is a bit tongue tied, but the actual meaning behind it is positive.”

*31 - 50 / Medium / Heavy Smoker*

“Oh, God, no that's a horrendous tongue twister.”

*31 - 50 / Light Smoker*

“What if you haven't tried quitting?”

*51 - 65 / Medium / Heavy Smoker*



# CAMPAIGN STATEMENTS

## I QUIT SMOKING – YOU CAN TOO

Generally perceived as one of the most encouraging statements – it taps into that desire to want to be surrounded by likeminded people going through the same struggles

That's good, that's the best one! Because that's what we were saying about having someone to tell you how they quit in a positive way.

*51 – 65 / Light / Medium Smoker*

"I listen to the radio a lot in the van. So a little advert like that might stick in your head, you know, a person talking about their experience."

*31 – 50 / Light Smoker*

"It's lighthearted, it's not offensive. Yeah - encouraging."

*51 – 65 / Light Smoker*

...but careful consideration needed over the tone of the message

"I feel like it's a bit patronising."

*31 – 50 / Light Smoker*

"Almost feels like its geared towards children. I don't know what it is. It just seems a bit juvenile to me."

*31 – 50 / Medium / Heavy Smoker*

Some feel it will only work when paired with the story behind the quit attempt – and they need to be able to relate to the person and their situation

"How did you do it? Why? What's the story?"

*18 – 30 / Light Smoker*

"I feel like it comes from a good place, but it doesn't mean it's gonna be the same for everyone in that situation. Everyone's personal situation is different."

*31 – 50 / Medium / Heavy Smoker*

# CAMPAIGN MESSAGING

**The general consensus is that smokers don't want to see health harms imagery – they're 'numb' to it and switch off from it**

"I'm definitely not into the crazy health stuff. It's horrible. It's just horrible to share that."

*51 – 65 / Light / Medium Smoker*

"A pack of cigarettes with a picture of gums or lungs on it actually says this is going to kill you. And we still all do it. So I think the message has got to be a lot more positive."

*51 – 65 / Light / Medium Smoker*

"I think when you see these really extreme health things you just shut off and shut down and it doesn't connect to you because it's so shocking. Like sometimes you can read too much bad news, and then you don't want to read the news anymore."

*31 – 50 / Medium / Heavy Smoker*

**It's got to be something new, something positive – what are smokers going to gain from quitting?**

"Tell me something new. Tell me something different. Come on, if you're gonna make me give up, say something interesting. It's always the same old stuff rolled out in a different way."

*31 – 50 / Medium / Heavy Smoker*

"I think it's about positive affirmations – being told well done, every day. You need positive stroking because it is tough. You need to be told how good you are if you don't smoke, and you need to be shown how rich you are, if you don't smoke."

*51 – 65 / Medium / Heavy Smoker*

"It'd be good to be like, this is what I couldn't do when I smoked. And then this is what I can do now."

*18 – 30 / Light Smoker*



# CAMPAIGN MESSAGING

**Many talked of wanting inspiration, encouragement, positivity**

**The idea of hearing positive stories from successful quitters [ex-smokers] really appeals**

**First person stories from real 'normal' – relatable - people [not celebs] are wanted**

**Smokers want to identify and recognise similar situations to their own**

**Consider evidencing real stories with statistics**

*"If it's something a bit more positive I think first person stories always help to get people involved or connected."*

*31 - 50 / Medium / Heavy Smoker*

*"It means more when it comes from someone who has been through it. Like all the little techniques and secrets and life hacks that they'd be able to offer, that looking up on the internet wouldn't be able to do."*

*18 - 30 / Medium / Heavy Smoker*

*"I'd like to hear the story of people who had been able to do it. Then you feel that you're part of the community as well."*

*51 - 65 / Light / Medium Smoker*

*"Real people are always better. When celebrities talk about getting the COVID vaccination, I just roll my eyes and say you've been paid to endorse this. But even if it's the illusion of a real person, I think it's always more effective than a celebrity for me."*

*31 - 50 / Light Smoker*



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# SUMMARY





**Bluegrass**

